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ABSTRACT

Educators, educational planners, and social critics convened in Toronto (Ontario, Canada) May 26-28, 1975, to discuss the role of the media, especially television, in planning for the future. The emphasis of the workshop was on political and social futures, specifically materials and situations which would enable people to gain more control over their lives. The five major themes of the plenary sessions and discussions were: images of the future; social, environmental, and physical trends; counter-trends; the colonizers and the colonized of the future; and anticipatory democracy for informed decision making. The task of the futures project was thus defined as providing materials and information about the future, and helping establish political structures to deal with it. Study groups met and reported on three specific areas: (1) the project's purpose, (2) the means of achieving this purpose, and (3) the contents appropriate to the five major themes of the workshop. Lists of participants in the conference and in specific groups are included, as are some participants' comments on a draft of the report. (Author/LS)

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The Ontario Educational
Communications Authority

Alternative Futures and the Role of the Media

WORKSHOP 2

May 26 - 28, 1975
Toronto, Ontario

CE 008 050

Alternative Futures and the Role of the Media

WORKSHOP 2

Report Prepared by
Lewis Miller

May 26 - 28, 1975
Toronto, Ontario

The Ontario Educational Communications Authority

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L. M.

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Preface

Much has happened at OECA since the first workshop on *The Transition to a Conserver Society: The Role of the Media*, in March 1974. We were particularly fortunate that James Dator, who as a visitor had played such a major part in the exploratory discussions, agreed to join OECA, thus ensuring that the sense of commitment expressed was not mislaid, that the ideas put forward were refined, and that the role of the media was critically examined.

One of the major concerns expressed by the steering committee of the first workshop was that the project might lose its momentum and that the strong sense of purpose that pervaded the closing session of Workshop 1 might dissipate during the difficulties of translating our hopes into action.

There was no doubt in anyone's mind that there was a role for the media – but what it was and how it was to be managed were questions we had not adequately addressed. It seemed important to continue the steering committee and add to its members James Dator, the project leader, and James Hanley, the individual within OECA who would have the responsibility for ensuring that the television programs and the other related media were developed and produced.

Dator was asked to develop a working paper which would be more specific in its content than the varied materials we had looked at before Workshop 1. In the working paper the shape of the project would be implied. In addition, it would suggest an approach, a bias, if you wish, which would indicate the "editorial opinion" that would pervade whatever OECA would do.

We also believed that we should test this position paper against a number of the people who had participated in the first workshop, plus others who had had more direct involvement and experience with the communications media. This was the genesis, then, of Workshop 2. Those who had been with us before provided the sense of continuity and a critical analysis of our progress or lack of it. The new guests brought other perceptions and different challenges.

All the people from OECA felt that the dynamics were right. On the last day the euphoria returned and there was a new sense of purpose on our part. Already subject treatments are being commissioned from a number of potential producers. If we have the understanding – and the wit – then our contention that there are alternative futures, that the choice of futures is a human choice, and that those choices will be good to the degree that people are knowledgeable, critically intelligent, and sensitive to the needs of others, will be borne out.

Ran Ide
July 1975.

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2. Introduction

How does one write a report on a process? How, specifically, does one write a brief, condensed report on a process that mushroomed dynamically for two and a half days? To compound the reporter's woes, the process, as one participant put it in the final session, had really been a meta-process, a process *about* the process that OECA is planning to undertake, to try to do justice to enormous future social problems.

Well, of course it's impossible, as Alvin Toffler sympathetically agreed when I voiced my concerns. And it's impossible for at least two reasons, one physical, the other logical. How can a person hope to report at all in the Gutenberg medium the process that went on: all the nonverbal accompaniments of spoken language, such as the "smiling-through-flowers" manner of a Saul Mendlovitz as he zealously scores points for a global society; the quizzical arching eyebrows of a John McHale; the contexts of pragmatic seriousness, the witty aphorisms of an Aubrey Singer; and, overall, the group feeling that there is still time to do something, even if that something be tardy and modest, toward helping limited portions of humanity cope with today and tomorrow.

It's impossible, logically, to report on this meta-process, simply because it is a process, open-ended (although that expression is too linear), never-ceasing (that's better). It's like taking a still-photo of mitosis and hoping that you have captured it. I am reminded of the late Ludwig Wittgenstein's apology in the Preface to his *Philosophical Investigations*, commenting on the problems of setting down his "philosophical remarks."

> The same or almost the same points were always being approached afresh from different directions, and new sketches made. Very many of these were badly drawn or uncharacteristic, marked by all the defects of a weak draughtsman. And when they were rejected a number of tolerable ones were left, which now had to be arranged and sometimes cut down, so that if you looked at them you could get a picture of the landscape. Thus this book is really only an album.

Rereading these words, from perhaps the greatest philosopher of our age, gives me some solace. This report, then, is really only an album.

3. Workshop Objectives

It is appropriate that OECA should have convened Workshop 2, "Alternative Futures and the Role of the Media," because it is really part of the process that Ran Ide began before Workshop 1, held in Toronto in March 1974. In all probability there will have to be other OECA workshops or seminars in future, on the future.

"Process" is a key concept. In the final plenary session of Workshop 1, one of the groups had this to report:

> Turning to the educational function of the media, the focus (after McLuhan) must be on process rather than content . . . [p. 19]

That was the message that has motivated the media people of OECA in the continuing development of the Futures Project since the first workshop. And an integral part of that process was the successful luring of professor James Dator from the University of Hawaii, on secondment, to head OECA's Futures Project. It is incidental, but highly significant, that Dator was also appointed Visiting Professor to the University of Toronto and has been active in the development of the university's first futures study course, to be offered in the forthcoming academic year.

But how does an OECA Futures Project team proceed in the development of a major proposal? How, especially, when the project director is forthright in saying that we must no prejudge even our choice of media for whatever tasks we choose to undertake? OECA, he pointed out in his opening statement to Workshop 2, is an educational *communications* agency, not simply an educational *television* agency. It would be surprising if television were not to be used for the project, but, he warned us:

> It is well not to be concerned [in our discussions] about television programming . . . not to imagine how these basic ideas are going to appear on the tube, because it is quite possible that we will decide to do no television programming at all. It may be that our actions will be entirely in some other form of educational communications.

This doesn't imply that the project team had been inactive, awaiting a second workshop for advice. Far from it. With the collective input of the Futures Project Steering Committee, James Dator had drawn up a paper stating the "Basic Philosophy, Purpose, and Themes" of the project (see section 4). They had entered a phase, however, when further expert advice and discussion seemed imperative — thus, Workshop 2.

The Steering Committee for the Futures Project was directive, with qualifications, about the advice they were seeking. After all, they had prepared a basic philosophy which was to serve as the starting point for written criticism by participants in advance of the workshop and as a focus for discussion when the participants convened. But they were still tentative. In a letter accompanying the paper addressed to the participants two months prior to the workshop, Dator wrote:

> Please note this is merely an outline indication of "Basic Philosophy, Purpose, and Themes." It is not (yet) a detailed statement of these themes, and is very far from intending to be an indication of specifically what points we want to get across, in what format, concerning those themes.

The following excerpts from that same letter outline general objectives for the workshop and provide further insights to the directions that had been taken by the Steering Committee and the Futures Project team:

> It might be useful first to see how you react to a tentative statement of the most fundamental and generalized assumptions of our project so far. That is to say, for example, . . . we do not expect to concentrate on "New Technologies that will Shape the Future" (though almost certainly this will be included to some extent).
>
> We do not intend to feature "environmental" issues primarily (for example, the Club of Rome's "Problématique" or the Science Council's "Conserver Society") though we are strongly minded to deal with these issues squarely, fairly, and firmly – but not exclusively.
>
> We do not see our project focussing mainly on basic survival or coping skills . . . though we believe we need to be very sensitive to the rapidly changing character of "the present" as we design and produce our materials. Our project about "the future" should try to avoid being out of date as soon as it is distributed!

So, if these are some of the possible emphases which the "Basic Philosophy" intends to indicate that our project will *not* stress, then, according to our philosophy, what are we expecting to do?

It is our fundamental instinct (as we now conceive it) to provide material and situations which will encourage and enable people to gain more control, personally and collectively, over their own lives. That is to say, our Project has a political purpose, and it concentrates on political and social futures, in the sense that it wishes to help people increase their knowledge and control over their own future.

> As we hope this statement of philosophy makes clear, we do not intend to ignore or unduly minimize technological, environmental, economic, spiritual, or other such concerns. Where appropriate, we will consider them. But we will consider them in the light of how they help or hinder people in achieving greater control over their own lives.

The participants were invited to consider the project as outlined at that point "as though it were a tree. The Basic Philosophy is the tap root and main trunk. The themes are the major limbs and branches." The task for the workshop was then set as follows:

> Would you help us "leaf out" these bare branches (and/or the ones you recommend instead) with more specific examples of content and issues?

4. Basic Philosophy, Purpose, and Themes

Basic Philosophy

The Futures Project of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority will proceed according to the following beliefs:

It is increasingly being argued that humanity is in the midst of a profound, uncertain, and rapid transformation. Society is thought to be lurching from an imperfectly understood, but inequitably structured, condition of the present into a future which, though even less well comprehended, is nonetheless viewed with profound pessimism by many people.

Neither Canada nor any other nation in the world today, it is asserted, is able to avoid the necessity either of making excruciatingly difficult decisions, or else of suffering major catastrophes which may severely hamper, cripple, or eliminate ways of life which many of its citizens have come to consider to be routine, if not basic, human rights.

Both the global socioecological system and that of each nation are said to be in serious crisis. Many people contend that the very survival of mankind itself is at stake, with the probability of a successful outcome not high.

Other people, some of whom do not deny the severity and urgency of the crisis from one perspective, nonetheless insist that this can and should be considered to be a time of unusual opportunity: that as old systems increasingly prove to be unworkable, it may be easier for new and better ones to be developed and brought on line; that if wise and heroic personal and public decisions are made in time, then we may be able to create a society which is better than that of the present or of the past.

The crucial difference, then, between a better – or at least a livable – future and one of catastrophe and chaos seems to be *the ability of people to make appropriate decisions in sufficient time*. The solutions to our problems are human rather than technological – although technology will certainly play a significant part in the human response. But the role of technology must be more clearly and consciously subservient to human needs and desires than has characteristically been the case heretofore.

If our fundamental need is for people who will make appropriate decisions in sufficient time, then we need people who are *motivated, informed, sensitive to the values and perceptions of others, and within political structures which facilitate relevant action*. Thus, part of the human response to the crises of the present should be educational – and education not only in the limited institutional sense of the word, but as a continuing experience for all ages, and for understanding for interpersonal compassion, and for political action. Yet current educational systems are far from adequate in these respects, and may in fact be significantly "part of the problem."

We believe, moreover, that the communications media also have not sufficiently recognized their unique obligations and opportunities in this most critical time. The media not only convey information – and misinformation – about the past, present, and future, but, more importantly, shape attitudes and images through their often careless and irresponsible projection of metaphors.

As an educational communications authority, we believe that we have an irresistible obligation to respond to these urgent challenges from the future. We believe that it is our duty to develop informational and support systems which enable people better to anticipate and more

rapidly, creatively, efficaciously, and humanely to respond to the major challenges of their world so as to gain greater control over their futures.

Fundamental Purpose of the Futures Project

On the basis of this guiding philosophical statement, then, we see the basic purpose of the Futures Project to be twofold:

1. To alert people to "the future" as an area of necessary and proper concern to themselves;
2. To encourage people to gain greater control over their future by providing them with:
   - ideas and metaphors
   - information
   - access to information
   - channels of communication
   - opportunities to unlock their imagination and creativity concerning desirable and feasible futures
   - political structures which facilitate their realizing their desired futures

Major Themes

To fulfil these basic purposes, the material produced by the Project will be grouped around the following five central themes:

1. Images. Different people throughout the world and within each society have different images of the future which help determine people's actions and inactions in the present, and thus help determine what the future will actually be.

2. Trends. Apart from, or in addition to, differing images, there are both global and local trends (social, environmental, and physical) which singly and through their interaction "push" societies toward certain futures and away from others. These trends are not always recognized by members of a society. Moreover, some of the trends are relatively easy to divert or modify (or nurture and enhance), while others are either difficult or impervious to change.

3. Counter-Trends. Some people persuasively argue that what are frequently thought to be the most important trends for a society are actually not so important, and that concentration on one set of trends often masks society from understanding what is more significant. In addition, there are some aspects of the world which may not at present be strong enough to be termed "trends," but which (either "naturally" or through cultivation) might become so in the future. Some of these counter-trends might be viewed as beneficial and some as harmful to human life or values. People might differ as to which are which.

4. Colonizers and the Colonized. Some people at present are in social situations which enable them to "colonize" the future. Through their actions in the present, they significantly limit other people's choices and chances in the future. In contrast, most people are formally ignorant of the future; we tend to be uneducated about the future, have unexamined ideas about it, and have few institutionalized ways of clarifying and acting upon our future hopes and fears. Indeed, vast areas of social and human behaviour are *structurally* shortsighted, if not wholly hindsighted. In only a few situations (or for certain people) is one encouraged or enabled to look ahead with foresight.

5. Anticipatory Democracy. Yet, increasingly, we need to be able – perhaps to be forced by our own predispositions and the institutions of society – to incorporate more of what used to be "the future" into what has become "the present."

We need to become more future-conscious to be able to anticipate more accurately the long-term consequences of present decisions and indecisions; to understand better the complex and systemic unity between the "parts" of our world; to be able to find a more appropriate mix between the necessity of

immediate self-enhancement and of future commonweal; and to learn how to live more humanely in an uncertain and multiplistic world.

Emerging techniques of futures research, technology assessment, social and environmental indicators, and the like need to be strengthened and new ones developed; examples in "anticipatory democracy" and of people living "against the trends" around the world should be identified and emulated; holistic models of "relevant utopias" merit wide discussion; and, in short, people must be given the information and opportunity for them to invent tomorrow.

Overall Tasks of the Futures Project

We thus see the overall tasks of the Futures Project to lie in the following six areas:

1. Provide sufficient and imaginative televised, videotaped, filmed, or radio-transmitted programming on the above themes.
2. Provide sufficient and imaginative printed, audiovisual, and other support material which deepens, broadens, and interprets the media programming.
3. Aid in the development of clubs, community viewing/action groups, and other educational/political structures which will help people use this and other material to think and act scientifically and creatively so as to control their own future.
4. Continue to help OECA itself ensure that the concepts of alternative futures and the pertinent techniques of futures research become a normal part of its own basic planning and policy-making.
5. Help the various operational and support sections of OECA – including individual programming units – incorporate an alternative futures perspective into their operations.
6. Continue to deepen contacts with the local educational and political community in Toronto, Ontario, and Canada so that it will support and demand future-oriented programming and actions of OECA.

Audiences

The intended audiences of the Project are people who watch educational television programming in Canada, the United States, Europe, Japan, and other parts of the world – or who can be induced to watch it through advertisements, events, or the "clubs" – and people in educational structures to whom the material can be distributed – high schools, universities and colleges, adult education classes, labour unions, religious groups, civic organizations, and the like.

Summary

In summary, then, this is a time of great crisis and of great opportunity. While human survival in the future seems to be in doubt, the very fluidity and uncertainty may provide a condition for unusual human creativity and enhancement. What is needed, we believe, are people who are sufficiently motivated, informed, and sensitive, who are empowered to act swiftly and efficaciously to ensure a better future for themselves and others.

It is the intention of the Futures Project of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority to aid in the nurturing of such people. Specifically, we intend not only to provide material containing ideas and information about the future (grouped according to the themes "images," "trends and counter-trends," "colonizers and the colonized," and "anticipatory democracy") but also to aid in the establishment of political structures which will so lift the consciousness about and skills concerning the forecasting and design of the future that persons and groups receiving the material will be encouraged and enabled to act more positively to gain control over their futures than they could have done without the material.

We do not imagine this to be an easy task, or even a politically safe one. But we do believe it is urgent and important. We intend to undertake it, and we would like your co-operation and guidance.

Prepared by James Dator — 24 March 1975.

5. Workshop Organization and Program

The agenda for the two and a half days of the workshop was planned toward providing opportunities for the invited "foliators" and perhaps independent "foresters" to offer advice to OECA on the developing Futures Project. The Steering Committee followed much the same pattern that had been devised for the first highly successful workshop fourteen months previously. The opening day would be directed, first, toward orienting participants to the basic philosophy and study group tasks which the groups would begin late afternoon and into the evening. The second day would see the three groups working toward completing advisory reports, touching home base midway through the day for review and perhaps reorientation. And the third day would be spent in plenary session, receiving and discussing the group reports.

The Steering Committee, which had met on a number of occasions prior to the workshop, both to review the progress of the ongoing OECA Futures Project and to plan Workshop 2, consisted of the following members:

Lewis Auerbach, OECA, on secondment to Science Council of Canada
James Dator, University of Hawaii, on secondment to OECA
Marion Duncan, OECA
James Hanley, OECA
Ran Ide, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of OECA
Arthur Porter, University of Toronto, and Chairman for Workshop 2
Ignacy Waniewicz, OECA, executive secretary and coordinator for Workshop 2.

Monday, May 26. Arthur Porter convened the workshop at 9:00 a.m. Following a welcome and introduction by Ran Ide, the working paper on Basic Philosophy was reviewed by James Dator. Brief, initial responses were then invited from participants, especially those who had not had an opportunity to make prior written responses. The first plenary session ended at 4:00 p.m. (I have to share with you the delight I had on reading the transcription from the audiotapes to see this plenary session referred to as "cleaner recession." Perhaps the transcriber was trying to tell us something.)

At 4:30 p.m. the three designated study groups (see Appendix A) met separately, with their suggested assignments (Appendix B). These assignments were sets of suggested questions that had been drawn up by Lewis Auerbach at the request of the Steering Committee. The study groups were invited to amend the sets and to suggest others, working generally, however, within the three following categories: Group A, the *Purpose*; Group B, the *Means*; and Group C, the *Content*. The study groups met until 7:00 p.m. Following dinner the participants reconvened for the viewing and discussion of programs relevant to futures studies.

Tuesday, May 27. Most of the day was devoted to the three separate study group sessions, with the interlude of a plenary session from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. for the purpose of receiving interim reports and reviewing the progress of the workshop.

In late morning and over the lunch period Ran Ide accompanied several of the participants on a brief tour of OECA facilities.

The evening, following dinner, was again scheduled for informal discussion and the viewing of programs, at least for those participants who were fortunate to be free from the tasks of writing study group reports.

Wednesday, May 28. The final plenary session of the workshop convened at 9:00 a.m., at which time each of the three study group reporters (Norman White for Group A, Andrew Baines for Group B, and Ray Jackson for Group C) presented their reports.

Following lengthy discussion of each of the reports, James Dator reviewed the workshop from his position as head of the project team that would be developing materials on the basis of suggestions and advice from the participants. The impression he gave was that, to return to his metaphor, the participants had served well in helping him to "leaf out" the tree.

In my role as reporter for the workshop, I was requested to sum up the session, but then, as now, I find the task of trying to sum up a non-linear activity to be impossible. I am reminded again of one of my favourite philosophers, Wittgenstein, who remarked that the study of philosophy, at least as he prescribed it, is like climbing a ladder and then pushing it away after one reaches the destination at its top. His point was that you can't go back. And, as I said in my summary statement, for those of us in OECA who participated in the workshop with the participants we were so fortunate to attract, we have emerged from the process as changed people. We can't go back. And if part of James Dator's aim is to alter the consciousness of people in their decisions for the future, then he has made an effective beginning with those of us who are responsible for the products and directions of OECA.

Ran Ide thanked the participants, assuring them that OECA had indeed received valuable advice that would be put to good use in the future development of the Futures Project. The workshop then adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

6. Opening Remarks — Ran Ide

Following his welcome to participants Ran Ide commented on a shift of emphasis between the first and second futures workshops. While the objective of both workshops was to seek advice on "the role of the media," the main theme of Workshop 1 was "the conserver society," whereas the main theme of Workshop 2 was "alternative futures." One of the reasons for changing the title, and focus, was that the Science Council of Canada had begun a project (prior to Workshop 1) entitled "The Conserver Society," and the Steering Committee had felt that the OECA project title should be different.

Perhaps a more significant reason for the title of Workshop 2, however, was that there had been a consensus in the first workshop that the concept of the conserver society seemed too limiting. The designation alternative futures evolved from discussions at the first workshop and the Futures Project Steering Committee accepted the concept and the title as their mandate.

Another fundamental point of agreement that had emerged from Workshop 1 was that of support for assumptions held within OECA in proposing the Futures Project. There had been unanimous agreement within the workshop that there was an important role for the media. It had been this support that had led to the development of a futures project team and the invitation to James Dator to join OECA on secondment. A further consequence of these actions was the position paper on "basic philosophy" which was now serving as the focus for discussion.

7. Opening Plenary Session

This report of the first plenary session is not, for the most part, a verbatim account. In view of the structure of the session, with the opening theme-setting review by James Dator of the Basic Philosophy of the Futures Project, followed by responses of the participants, mainly those who had not had a prior opportunity to make written responses, it is possible to try to paraphrase what appear to be the main points of the statements. On occasion the eloquence and importance, I believe, of what participants said have motivated me to try to quote them more closely. In taking these liberties I have tried as much as possible to refrain from using quotation marks, and I ask forgiveness.

Excerpts of the written responses of the other participants are added to this section of the report.

It is in this part of the report that the limitations of the print medium become most evident. As John Platt says in his statement, print and television complement one another, and for this part of the report I regret the inability to offer a videotape presentation. Generalizations had to be made here that completely fail to do justice to the contexts of the discussions. Agreements and disagreements are set down in flat sentences that have no choice but to be out of context, failing to capture the wit and camaraderie of the proceedings, especially of the instances when the most telling points were being scored. I don't apologize for this failure. I simply bring it to your attention.

Introduction to Workshop 2

Following the setting of guidelines for Workshop 2 by Arthur Porter, James Dator reviewed the working paper on the basic philosophy for the development of the Futures Project. A major problem for OECA in undertaking the Futures Project was the tremendous diversity of ideas concerning approaches an organization such as OECA might take. There were five major current images of the future, at least three of which were held among participants of the workshop.

1. Traditional – not to worry or think about it.

While none of the participants represented this view, the overwhelming majority of individuals in the world probably do fall into this category. The workshop participants and the Steering Committee for the Futures Project thus represent a highly skewed sample of opinion. In considering possible audiences, therefore, how should OECA make contact with those who think about the future as if it were simply a continuation of the past and present?

2. Progress, or growth – a linear development along existing trends or lines.

The assumption of this image is that the future can be predicted by some sort of linear function from the events of the past. This kind of approach motivated some of the original interests in futures research by members of government, business, education, and economic enterprises, who hoped to have formulas that would enable them to understand and plan for the progress or development of their organization or society. There were some participants in the workshop who reflected this image to some extent.

3. Ecological – counter to the growth image.

Those who hold this view see the necessity, either for moral or environmental or resource reasons, of putting an end to further growth. There were representatives of this view, also, among the participants, and they hold views fundamentally at odds with the developmental futurists. It is felt by the ecological supporters that the attempts at linear extrapolation by the developmental futurists are neither possible nor desirable.

4. Transformation – a basic discontinuity, unlike the discontinuity characterized by the ecological perspective.

Those who increasingly use the term transformation for their image of the future speak of fundamental shifts of institutions and values. This is a relatively new perspective and, of those who hold this view, a significant percentage is among the participants of the workshop. This view will thus be further amplified during the proceedings.

5. Mystical – somewhat spiritual.

A growing group of people have this image of the future. This perspective, if broadened, is somewhat spiritual, although broadening it in this way is perhaps to move from the typically mystical animism, a belief in a form of relationship with the humanities, with nature, and with the cosmos. Probably none of the participants hold this perspective, although there were perhaps a couple who, at least privately, were "soft" on mysticism, and perhaps spiritualism. An example

cited of this view was that of William Thompson, author of *The Edge of History* and *Passages About Earth*. At a recent conference, Professor Thompson postulated that a basic problem was recapturing an animistic point of view. He suggested, for example, the setting up of agrarian, self-sustaining communities on the basis of animism and electronics.

In view of the divergence of these sets of images of the future a major problem for the OECA Futures Project team is accurately to reflect this divergence in developing materials for varied potential users. The problem is reflected in the variety of opinions in the written responses of the participants to the working paper on basic philosophy. Among the participants responding, for example, were those who felt that the opening statement of the paper expressed too much of a "doom and gloom" attitude, while, on the other hand, there were those who felt that this pessimistic attitude was not sufficiently forcefully expressed.

The working paper did attempt to set forth a view that would be clarified and criticized in the proceedings of the workshop. This view is implied in part by the negations, as primary concerns, of three attitudes that could shape the content of programs on futures; and these attitudes have in fact shaped the contents of most programs produced in the past by other media agencies as well as OECA. The three attitudes may be indicated by the concepts technological, or technocratic; ecological, or environmental; and survival, or basic life-coping skills.

The perspective that is proposed as the primary focus for the OECA Futures Project might be said to be political or philosophical. The Steering Committee for the project felt that, whether we are in a time of crisis or a time of opportunity, there was a fundamental need for people to have the ability to make appropriate decisions in sufficient time; and therefore there is the need for people who are sensitive to the values and perceptions of others, within political structures that facilitate relevant actions. It is important, therefore, that any program produced for this project should be questioning, to encourage people to question and to challenge themselves and others concerning their attitudes toward the future. It is insufficient simply to produce materials designed to raise consciousness and provide information about the future. It is also important to find ways in which people can actively realize values acquired through the activity of using the materials; hence the notion of "colonizing the future." Groups such as those in the workshop that are active in future-making decisions are increasing in society. For example, the recently established Ontario Royal Commission on Electric Power Planning, of which Arthur Porter was appointed chairman, has the mandate to examine fully the long-range planning concepts of Ontario Hydro for the period 1983 to 1993 and beyond. Among the wide range of matters to be considered by the Commission are general principles on siting generating stations and transmission corridors, power generation technology, interconnecting and power pooling with neighbouring utilities, etc. Thus this Commission is responsible for advice on decisions that will have effects long into the future. This is a "colonizing" activity. One of the proposed objectives of the Futures Project is to assist OECA users to become aware of the importance of decisions made today that will have "colonizing" effects into the future.

Following James Dator's review of the working paper, Ran Ide commented briefly on the prospective target audiences or users of materials and the mode of financing of such materials that would be developed for the Futures Project. Since OECA is an Ontario educational agency its first concern must be to serve Ontario citizens. The kinds of questions that would be treated by a futures project, however, have international implications and would undoubtedly be of interest to many people beyond Ontario. Conversely, since education generally knows no boundaries, many educational programs produced beyond Ontario are of interest to Ontario citizens, and, in fact, OECA has purchased rights for the distribution of many programs that have been produced elsewhere. Further, there are precedents for involvement with non-Ontario agencies in the production of materials and OECA has participated in co-production activities with organizations such as the BBC and the Agency for Instructional Television, an international consortium with its headquarters in the U.S. Already, in fact, there have been expressions of considerable interest in the OECA Futures Project by people outside Ontario. If we are able to develop a plan for using electronic and associated means of communication to make a contribution to some of the questions relating to the future, and if our work is sufficiently compelling, the question of funding would be among the least difficult of questions to be resolved.

Responses of Participants

This subsection is an attempt to paraphrase and sometimes quote excerpts of statements of some of the participants in response to the invitation of the Steering Committee to be critical of the working paper on basic philosophy as well as to James Dator's questions in his opening statement to the workshop.

Eleonora Masini spoke to the *political focus* of the proposed project, a realistic and indeed the most important focus. Most of us have been undertaking our pursuits for too long, trying to face and to solve the problems in which we are involved without the participation of the people who are really facing these problems. We tend therefore to be reinforcing the system that has created the problems. Unless we try to face and possibly solve the problems through the eyes of the people who have to make individual and collective choices, we are not likely to be successful.

In undertaking this task — and these comments relate to the first of the major themes, *Images*, outlined in the working paper — we must all learn, first, to clarify continually the values on the basis of which we make choices. We should strive for a continuous critical position, comparing our values and choices with those of other people, to become aware of alternatives.

We must also motivate ourselves and others to become aware that we are actually responsible for the present and the future. In doing this we must try to develop the listening capacity within each of us instead of the consuming capacity.

In undertaking a project of this nature through the use of media a major problem is how to motivate users to become more than passively aware or informed about the situation being presented to them. Through media it is easy for a person vicariously to live another situation which is not his own, but how deep is this awareness or participation?

Turning to a consideration of the themes in the working paper, she expressed more interest in *counter-trends* than in *trends*. Counter-trends, she felt, are indications of future alternatives, whereas trends reflect ongoing systems.

The themes *Colonizers and the Colonized* and *Anticipatory Democracy* are significant for the project and merit further consideration. There is a philosophic problem of sorting out to what extent one is a colonizer or one is colonized, and considerations of this problem relate to the extremely important topic of *anticipatory democracy*. Two examples were offered of current experiments in anticipatory democracy: the first, within educational training in a commune, an educational agricultural community established by Danilo Dolci, near Palermo, Italy; and the second, related to the "psychiatric world," the Basaglia psychiatric communities in Italy. These would be amplified further during the group discussions to follow.

Saul Mendlovitz, while agreeing with the political or social objectives of the Steering Committee, had some disagreement with their concern for the theme *Images*. He was not so much concerned with specific disagreements on value decisions (it was of little importance, for example, that, in response to the temperature of the room, he found himself putting on a sweater as Andrew Baines was taking off his jacket) as he was with whether or not we help ourselves and others organize in movements for decision and action. This should be a basic purpose of an educational medium. The main reason for his being attracted to the workshop was, in fact, his understanding that in the development and realization of the Futures Project there is the possibility of engaging the populace in some kinds of clubs, such as clubs for education.

Another point of disagreement was in the belief that most people of the world are engaged in futuristic thinking. Their thinking might be quite different from that which might be voiced within the narrow sample of the workshop participants. An example was that of a prominent political scientist from Africa who had disagreed strongly with the somewhat pessimistic tenor of one of his (Mendlovitz's) addresses. From the point of view of the African, never has the world been going better. It might be a healthy corrective to possibly parochial views to have workshop representation, say, from East Africa — some who are liberationist, some Maoist. In the absence of such views he would try to fulfil this role.

He was in fundamental agreement with the working paper on the necessity for global social movement, one that sees *transformation* taking place. There were "competing strands" of attitudes assumed in this transformation.

One strand is held by those who might be termed *"the equilibrium people."* These people control the wealth and power of the world and would hope to do so during any transition period from one political system to another. This group might also be termed "the Kissingerian School," and it would include the

Brezhnevs, the Maos, and Nixon and Kissinger after the bombing of Cambodia and Hanoi. They would prefer to maintain the political system that we are now in, System One, but if there is a transition to a System Two they would want the wealth and power to go with the same people who hold it now.

The basic attitude of System Two might be termed an "equity ideology," a set of values within which there would be greater participation in the wealth and power of the world. This ideology is widely held in third world and fourth world countries and exists as a catalyst of social change in the first world.

A third view, which probably most of the participants of the workshop hold, is that which might be called the "populist progressive humanist" view. This ideology is much stronger than was suggested in the working paper on basic philosophy of the Futures Project. A movement has already begun, and reflective of this movement are the following three questions:

1. Is it for the benefit of humanity? Can we ask this question every time we engage in any kind of political, or social, or scientific, or creative act?
2. Toward operationalizing this basic question we may ask a sub-question: Is what we're doing aiding the lowest 40 percent of the globe in terms of access to material goods and resources? Is what we're doing giving the lowest 40 percent an opportunity, if they want to become involved, to participate in decisions about their future?
3. A third question is, how do we operationalize the term "accountability"? To whom are we accountable? For what are we accountable?

The proposed mode of activity toward satisfaction for these basic questions, for participation of, and accountability to, the lowest 40 percent, would be the formation of cell meetings of the "global movement of peace and justice." It is crucial that over the next fifteen years the global movement, through a network of cell meetings, set for itself political and social targets. Ten to fifteen targets may be established, with a third for the short run, a third for the intermediate run, and a third for the long run. None of them may have a better chance of succeeding than, say, 20 percent. Examples of targets for the short run are the correction of injustices in Rhodesia by bringing it into some kind of value system that we all agree upon, and the focussing of attention on the kinds of commitments made by the big powers to any non-proliferation treaty. If one considers the world's huge social movements, such as the development of Christianity, or Communism, or the abolition of slavery, an integral aspect of these movements was the activity of "study grouping" and "cell meetings." A basic question for this workshop, then, as for the Futures Project, is the extent to which the mass media may be used with the involvement and participation of masses of people.

John Platt was in general agreement with Saul Mendlovitz, although there were several points of difference. While he agreed that "transformation" is already here, and "the total force of this world survival . . . is now spreading everywhere," Saul's time scale is too long. Citing an article by McGeorge Bundy in the August 1974 edition of *Saturday Review*, the writer had "the catastrophes" right and the time-constant right. We're in for a decade of disasters, but these may be educational disasters in the sense that their enormity and stupidity will make us realize that we have to do something. Within the next three years there is every likelihood, for example, of terrorist nuclear weapons, with a Hiroshima-type bomb, and the wiping out of Tel Aviv, or the corner of New York around the U.N. building, or the Aswan Dam. All countries will be concerned then about the control of nuclear energy since every group is threatened by a terrorist bomb. To follow McGeorge Bundy's scenario, the result is likely to be a series of covenants, on peace-keeping, on food, on world resources, on population, etc. And we will begin to make bargains to support and help that lower 40 percent of the population, not only for humanitarian reasons or reasons of conscience but for political reasons. The whole economic structure of the world is going to be continuously disrupted unless we begin to practise justice. By 1989 we might have a great world covenant.

This is a reasonable date in terms of the speed of social reversals in the past ten years. As a result of the impact of great technological changes, for example, of satellites, nuclear weapons, oral contraceptives, and television, attitudes that have been held for centuries have been totally reversed. In the last six years a kind of détente has been reached among a number of countries, not simply the U.S., Russia, and China. For the first time in history we have an international money system that was not imposed by national or primitive currency. We have changed our

sex laws on abortion, contraceptives, homosexuality, pornography, and birth control. For the last three years the U.S. birthrate has been below replacement level. In eleven countries, including capitalist, communist, and Roman Catholic, the birthrate is now at or near replacement level.

The patterns of these reversals are oriented away from the isolated, tribal, selfish nation-state patterns and toward global responsibility toward a steady-state society. These ethical, attitudinal, legal reversals are probably the most advanced in the U.S. simply because we've hit the problems first. In many cases we've created the problems. On the other hand, there are many countries racing behind; and the reason for these sudden changes, all coinciding, is mainly television. "Television is the adrenalin of the body politic." It raises all our consciousness together. A billion and a half people walk on the moon together. All of us were at the Olympic Games in Munich and saw the terrorist aftermath. All of us were at the Kennedy funeral, at Bangladesh, in Vietnam. We see starvation, the last, gasping breath of the emaciated child.

Television, which has such a strong emotional component, does not always have the informational component. Print complements it. Television and print are seen working together: television to raise consciousness and emotional and attitudinal change, and then local action through the medium of print to create the details of what is to be done. It is this possibility of simultaneity of action that makes it possible for the reversals to take place in three to ten years' time. A thirteen-year period, at the present rate of change, is ample time for transformation to new world management structures, with functional organizations, such as a food organization, an economics organization, an ocean resources organization, each like feedback organizations in the human body. These functional networks uniting around the globe, each in its own framework, will bring us step by step to the point where we might have some form of world government.

We're now in the midst of change, and it is our business to see in what way we can facilitate humane choice and wise institution building instead of foolish building, building on a framework of hope rather than despair, so that we hang on and work through the crisis moments instead of giving up and shrinking into our shells. The year 2000 is not to be predicted. It depends on too many intersecting events between now and then, too many assassinations, too many overlapping crises. It's not to be predicted, it's to be created. And this time of meeting is a component in the creation of the images, the paths, and the efforts toward that future.

John McHale concentrated on some of the practical problems to be faced by the media in presenting a futures project.

We all have very strong images of what the future will be like, other people have their images, and we ought to respect in some ways what they want to do as well. Perhaps one approach is to begin using the *critical* function of media, a function now virtually non-existent: that is, to continue the questioning, criticizing, assessing, analysing, presenting, and confronting of various kinds of visions. Current approaches of the media to the future tend to be a kind of homogenous potpourri of all kinds of bits and pieces which have nothing to do with the future. What purports to be "futures" programming is rather an imposing of conventional and relatively obsolete attitudes which masquerade as futurist thinking.

The participants in the workshop share "the notion of the future as catalyst action." In communicating this we are in many ways more concerned with the individuals within that mass we are talking about. Those who work in the media know that "the great mass" is split down to all kinds of masses: age, sex, class, occupation, differences in life-styles and ideologies, etc., and that part of the job has to be to cater in some way to the varied audiences. One of the images from the working paper, however, is "a wee bit . . . that we've got the message, we know what it's all about and we're going to lead you into the promised land." The project should rather avoid the proselytizing of any notion of the future that certain kinds of events are going to overtake us willy nilly. Many of the things that seem to have been reversed were not in a sense reversed by leaders at all. The leaders for the past few decades have been followers. Most of the main issues, the issues that wrench societies around, have emerged out of this amorphous mass called "the people." Maybe we ought to follow them and see what they're doing.

The proposed Futures Project is in an awkward position, attempting in some ways to substitute constraints of the future for the burdens of the past. Perhaps part of the job should be to help people be more at home in their particular presence, freer to enjoy both the past and the future.

Another kind of problem is how to deal with the "noise" on our channels, the vast quantities of aimless material. The amount of noise on the channel at present is perhaps so extensive that it would overpower the possibility of presenting material on alternative futures.

How, too, do we deal with the problems of contemporary culture? We're all culture animals, embedded in particular kinds of culture systems. Part of what we may need to do is merely to take a fresh look at the culture in which most of our people are embedded and which they enjoy.

There is a need to be concerned for protecting the individual from the threat of mass movement. There is need to do much more practical work, to be concerned with what needs to be done, and how we are to bring people up to some notion of equity. Some work today surveys basic human requirements. Can they be satisfied? Can material supply levels be achieved without transgressing the limits of the biosphere? We have talked about human networks, but we know very little about them. We have laid them out, we have surveyed them, the new publics, the ways in which we can use existing international organizations. But there is need for more work. Any mass movement that one would join would take elements of all of these and try to weld them together, not into a movement but into some sense of resonance in relationship to one another.

The role of communications is to be deliberately subversive, upsetting the pendulums, not merely to be exposed to the public but to be exposed in some kind of meaningful framework, not merely to encourage confrontation but to encourage the kind of confrontation from which the questions may be asked: What can come out of this? What do you do next?

Alvin Toffler, narrating an anecdote about a rabbi who replied "you're right" to three incompatible and contradictory queries, expressed agreement with much that he had heard during the morning, but nonetheless professed to qualms that have to do mainly with two issues.

The first has to do with "the whole theoretical question of globalism, and what relationship that has to localism, participation, democracy, etc." Clearly we need some sort of "management system," since this implies something about the nature of it. "Obviously we can't go along with tracks we've been going on without serious risk of destroying the planet." On the other hand, nobody knows the answers to this problem and therefore we must be cautious about any suggestion of "our carrying the message to the 'unwashed,' " that we're going to tell people how to put this together, and that we're going to use the evocative power of media to convey the globalist message. Along with this, do we run the risk of overloading people by just dumping too many problems on them? "I call that 'future shock.' "

These questions seem clearly related to the second issue: Who determines or decides what the messages in the system are to be? Further, we're talking about a one-way communication system. We're talking about us *sending* messages but we're not saying anything about *receiving* messages. Agreeing with John McHale's comment that everybody out there has his or her image of the future and that there are bits of wisdom and truth in all of them, ought we to contemplate a massive exercise, whether it is futurist in orientation or not, without at least raising the question about how ordinary people get their messages into the system as well? While agreeing that there is a great need for experts, there is also a great need for non-experts. Unless non-experts are somehow included in the process of formulating a vision we're going to get a technocratic vision that is not only going to be very unpleasant to live with, "it also ain't going to work."

Of relevance to the question of feedback systems and participation is an experiment that has been going on in the U.S., as a result of the publisher's objective to publicize *Ecospasm*.[1] The publisher pointed out that in every major city in the U.S. there is a talk show with talk-jockeys who take calls from the audience. The simple format proposed was that the talk-jockey asked callers, first, *to predict next year's headlines* (in business, politics, economics, ecology, sports, entertainment, etc.). Next, they were asked *to predict the headlines of 1985*, what goals would be of interest with respect to the world, your local community, and all the other categories. Then they were asked to state *what they wanted the headlines to be in 1985*. This is now being tried in various cities and it is still too early for more than an interim report. One of the early responses from a light entertainment announcer enthusiastically reported that his listeners kept the phones going for forty-five minutes. This kind of response, from a simple-format program, admittedly an unsophisticated experiment, lends support to the "feeling that people are not simply saturated with messages, but saturated with one-way messages that they can't ever talk back to, that there is a bursting

[1] Alvin Toffler, *Ecospasm*, Bantam Books, Chicago, Illinois, 1975.

frustration out there to get back at the media, to get their messages somehow into the system." Relating this to the theme of the workshop, "if we're talking about doing something unusual or doing something effective, that consideration ought to be part of the package."

Ian Macdonald said that a thought that had occurred as a result of some common denominator in the various commentaries during the morning was that perhaps we should be looking a little more critically at the present when looking to the future. Do some of the theories that have been put forward really fit our perceptions? In particular, we might look at the proposition that the level of consciousness might be raised as a result of media experiences. It had been suggested during the morning that some of the cataclysms that might happen in the future, such as food disasters or war or violence, might have sufficient impact to change our behaviour. But there is little evidence that exposure to the world state via the media community has really changed our behaviour.

Two pieces of evidence support this caution. These relate to selfishness and violence. On the matter of violence, there is a great deal of evidence that the magnification of violence by the media has had little impact on behaviour in the daily life of organized society. And, on the matter of selfishness and acquisitiveness, if we look at Canada at the moment there is evidence that it may be the greatest problem we face. On the basis of economic analysis, what seems to be happening in this country is that, on the productivity or growth side, we've already arrived at the "steady state," but, on the demand side, selfishness and acquisitiveness are undiminished. This has resulted in new problems of economic policies. The force is strong enough that consumer credit grows exponentially, so that the future is being compressed into the present. A lot of the liberationist movements are really reinforced tendencies of selfishness and self-interest, very much concerned about the individual and not a great deal concerned about the society, either in immediate circumstances or in the rest of the world. Why is this proposition, then, acceptable to this group? If so, "what does it tell us about the increasing exposure or the increasing impact of the media in the future?"

Lewis Perelman, in reacting to James Dator's opening statement, indicated some discomfort about the categorization of attitudes about the future. As Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen pointed out in a recent book, "reality is seamless"; thus, although typology cannot be discounted, since it is necessary for discourse, it is obviously false if it presumes accurately to represent reality. While recognizing that the *traditional* image (not to worry about the future) still exists to some extent, it is doubtful to what extent the *developmental* image still exists. The separation of the *ecological*, the *transformational*, and the *mystical* images gives difficulties. The ecological and the transformational points of view especially seem intimately related to each other. Similarly, to what extent is it possible to exclude the concern for the technocratic, ecological, and survival themes from the proposed Futures Project?

Complete agreement is expressed with the essence of the working paper, that the effort should be in raising consciousness and providing channels for action.

On the other hand it is difficult to follow the prescription not to worry about funding and the media process. The availability of resources has a lot to do with priorities and with what is to be accomplished. "The medium is the message."

With reference to the concept of providing channels for action it has been a very common tendency in past efforts of this kind to stress a kind of voluntaristic approach, to bring the burden of change on the individual acting alone. This appeal to people voluntarily to stop littering, to turn thermostats down, etc., puts the burden of proof on the public as a whole for solving the problems which are created synergistically by the power structures of society. The emphasis of the project should be on giving everybody a framework for constructive action, recognizing where the real sources of change are located. We should look to cooperative mechanisms for everybody to make reasonable sacrifices which improve the condition as a whole. This is the social contract approach, of recognizing that in essence everybody is part of the solution. To solve the problems of society as a whole requires mechanisms of cooperation and political action. In this the media have an important role to play in being the glue that holds those mechanisms together, facilitating the kind of grass-roots cooperative effort that can be effective.

The concept of returning Power to the People is naive in the sense that really the people are stupid, not because they are intrinsically stupid but because the organs which are responsible for their education, in the broad sense of

that term, have been stupid and have not really provided the kinds of information and ideas that would enable them to be more competent in creating their own future. Conversely, the leadership doesn't know how to lead either, and is probably more incompetent and less sensitive to what the critical needs are. So they need to be educated also. In a sense we're all incompetent, all ignorant. None of us knows what the future is. The problem is "getting it together," to bring together the sources of skill, competency, knowledge, enlightenment, positive values, and so forth; and the media have obviously a crucial role to play because they're the links that can bring people together.

A linguistic pitfall we easily slip into is to use the word "we," when we say, for example, "we're going to do this." But this obscures aspects of the whole problem of change. Change will never occur because of unanimous agreement on anything. Inevitably change is a result of some kind of power struggle. Each individual must make a choice about what his assessment of the problem is and then do the best he can. What this implies is that there is no way for an educational medium to adopt the position of a pinnacle of so-called objectivity, saying we're going to stand back and adopt objective points of view. That position simply does not exist.

Another issue is that of competency. There is a growing recognition that the problems which confront us are so serious that they cannot be dealt with in marginal ways, that they require very fundamental kinds of change. An important question is not merely, how can this organization and this Futures Project increase people's awareness or motivation or sensitivity, but what can it do to provide them with a greater competency? Nobody knows the answers to these questions. So the role becomes one of posing the questions, as John McHale said, and of finding the best available knowledge, experience, and wisdom, bringing in from where it exists to the points of action, to enable those who want to change, to have ideas, to have alternatives, to have processes to experiment with. "And that to me is the essential role of what this organization can and should do."

Andrew Baines noted several themes and strands that had been running through the morning's discussions. Should we be proselytizing or should we not? Should we be creating a mass movement using clubs or cells? Should we be informing potential leaders of problems we perceive or should we be conditioning followers? Do we want people to be more capable of managing their own futures? Basically this means do we want to teach them skills and techniques?

One way of approaching the question of alternative futures that has not been explicitly stated is through virtues and vices. This approach comes naturally to a medical educator concerned with admission to medical school attempting to predict who will be a "good" doctor. The prerequisites for future competence in medicine are not facts or skills but attitudes. What we want is somebody who is honest and conscientious. Likewise, if we can get those sorts of virtues into a population we need worry less about the future. The question is how to do this.

Another question touching on the role of the media is that of ethics versus majority opinion. What is the good thing to say publicly? At the moment capital punishment is a bad thing, but you might find at any given time that the majority of the population disagrees with the official position. In Canada at present, for example, there has been a concern with racism in medical schools. There is a large Chinese population wishing and able to obtain entrance into medical schools, and this disturbs a number of people. The public stance of the medical schools is that racial prejudice shall not rule, that any man is equal to any other man. But this public stance does not necessarily reflect the attitudes of some medical educators and doctors. It is terrifying to think that we could very easily through some chance manipulation of the media produce the situation in which racism became a virtue. This ties in with what Alvin Toffler was saying when he spoke of what the headlines will be and what they should be in 1985. Should one be concerned with modifying current headlines in order to affect the future?

We have been theorizing about such questions as proselytizing, reaching leaders, conditioning followers, and so forth, but, to be more pragmatic, we have to be concerned with these topics being put in ways which attract audiences. And one of the problems with educational activity, whether it's in universities or OECA or anywhere is that it is often boring. "Entertainment" might be a word that we should look at as a useful focus. We might wonder whether Archie Bunker has moulded opinion. What is the effect on the audience of TV dramas involving people like Bunker and Kojak? Are these programs doing what we want to do?

Aubrey Singer said that he recently had a sign made for his desk which reads: "I don't rule out entertainment."

Commenting on implications from the morning's discussion, he pointed out first that the media doesn't want to be "used."

Nor is the possibility to be ruled out that the people "out there" are the same as the people in here. Nor are "the people" stupid.

The "futurists," if they may be called that, may be viewed with a certain amount of skepticism, for a rather complicated reason. To start with language, Steiner, in his new book, makes the point that the world would be a strange place without a future tense. Imagine such a world. We wouldn't even have got here. There would be no heroes in the novel, because the hero always lives through a time with no future and then comes through to a time when there is a future. And so there's something slightly heroic in the idea of futurism, futurology, whatever it is.

There was a school once that used similar phraseology: "What we need are people who are motivated, informed, sensitive to the values and acceptance of others, within political structures which facilitate action." Similar phrases are in the manifestoes of the Italian futurists written by Marinetti. This is a sense of their language: "New beauty is born today from the chaos of the new contradictory sensibilities that we futurists will substitute for a form of duty." This may be called "geometric and mechanical spread." The elements are: hope, desire, control, force, speed, will-power, order, discipline, a feeling for the great city, the crazy optimism that results from this, muscles and sport; and simultaneity that derives from tourism, business and journalism, a passion for success, a happy precision of gears and well-oiled force, concurrence of energies that converge into a single trajectory. That was the Italian fascists.

There is something extremely dangerous in this. Recently, reading on Popper, I came across something that is absolutely ideal for this meeting because it rejects the idea of predicting the future in new left terms. The argument takes the following tack. It can be admitted without self-contradiction that all knowledge is a by-product of material development. It is logically impossible to predict future knowledge. If we could predict future knowledge we would have it now and it would be present discovery. From this it follows that if the future contains any significant discoveries at all it is impossible to predict it scientifically. Another argument is that if the future were scientifically predictable it could not, once discovered, remain secret, which the future is.

The reason for skepticism about futurists is that their arguments can't be submitted to criticism. I can say they're possible, and therefore I'm very worried about my credibility as a broadcaster unless I state very clearly the context in which the ideas are stated. And to say that you're going to use the media it is very important to the context of these ideas to state the fact that it is difficult to subject them to criticism. Alvin Toffler's format (the talk-jockey show requesting listeners to make predictions) is brilliant. The context is there. Your prediction is as good as mine.

Editor's note: At this point chairman Arthur Porter permitted Alvin Toffler to intercede. The following is close to the transcript:

Alvin Toffler. Can I say a word. I mean, you've got me all roused up. (laughter) Many of us, of course, have read the futurist manifesto, Marinetti and the others, and I hasten to say that most of those people who have been called futurists and sometimes call themselves futurists regard the term with great unhappiness. I don't want to be in Marinetti's bag. I am not a fascist, and I don't extol speed for speed's sake, violence for violence's sake, and war for war's sake. It's an accident of history that this has emerged. We also don't like the word futurologist because we're not Jeane Dixon, and most of us, I think, don't place too much predictive reliability on the stars.

I try to avoid the term futurist and use social critic. But people call me a futurist, and I say, well, okay, I won't reject the term. But I think most of the people in this room who wear that heading do not believe they're in the business of predicting the future by any stretch of the imagination; but are rather in the business of trying to imagine alternatives, possibilities, and trying to influence the course of events one way or another. Even these, even the projection of a scenario, necessarily is an attempt to shape the future by influencing people to think what might happen. There are not many people who would say we predict.

Now, having said that, it is nevertheless true that in the so-called futures movement there is a kind of techno-fascist wing, or, as somebody else called it, electro-fascism. There is a kind of hard, technocratic, computer-elite oriented, anti-humanist wing which really believes that if you can get all the numbers right you can solve the problems; and the way you do it is by getting more experts with more computers

and more resources and more specialized talents, and so on. If one looks at the history of the development of the futures movement, and John and Magda McHale can trace this history in detail, it has a lot of origins in that wing; but that isn't the future of the futures movement.

Aubrey Singer. If I can carry on now, returning to Alvin Toffler's program suggestion. It's a brilliant idea. A broadcaster might do a series on these programs and find out what people think. One could do them as radio programs and get the tapes and then could make a major television series out of ordinary people's predictions. The first predictions might be submitted to slightly more informed opinion and you could then ask the people to do their predictions again and see what happened.

Recently we did a show on a hospital where extreme psychotic patients were treated by just being able to live together; and one of them had a sign over his bed which said, "Today is the day we worry about yesterday." A very good series of television programs could be developed out of this.

On the topic of "noise" on the channel, "noising" the system may possibly be avoided by being specific in your targeting of programming.

Somebody asked the question today, "Do you give people what they want or what they ought to have?" This question was asked of a senior BBC broadcaster and his reply was that this is the one question never asked of a broadcaster. Noel Coward said, "Well, if you don't know what show-business is, get out of show-business"; and, if you don't know what interests people, then you don't know the communications game. In using the media, what has to happen is that the idea has to be part of the consciousness of society before it gets picked up by television producers. The problem, for the Futures Project, is to start first at your own level, which is the academic; and from the academic get your fruit to the mass.

James Hanley wished to point out that the North American television environment is fundamentally different from the environment in Britain in that so much of North American television, with the "noise" we talk about, is commercially oriented. But educational communications as practised in OECA, as contrasted with any other North American organization known to us, is that we don't do anything that isn't very carefully thought out in terms of its objectives. If commercial broadcasters do any public affairs broadcasting it's only to retain a licence.

"Public broadcasting" people in the United States think of themselves as an alternative to commercial broadcasters. They consciously drop the term "educational" because it is viewed as a pejorative word. But in their attempts to supply alternative broadcasting they are becoming elitist, supplying cultural material for an elite group.

OECA is different. We're small and not effective – yet. We will be though. We lack only money. What Aubrey Singer said about television producers reflecting only what people are already conscious of is probably true. But the big difference about an educational organization is that in it the educators play a really fundamental role. One of the real roles here in OECA is for these individuals to search out all of the feelings of the society, to crystallize them and contextualize them in different way than what is normally seen. However interesting a program suggestion might seem, it has to be viewed in our terms in an intellectual context that has a rationale of its own leading to certain conclusions that may or may not be argumentative. Problems of today are not seen simply as problems of today but as problems that have to be solved in such a way as to help to determine the future in a way in which we want it to be. Television producers will react favourably to this kind of thing, but it has to be presented in this form. Otherwise television producers normally don't have the time or the resources, and so they tend to react in a haphazard, helter-skelter way. "That's the way it goes," they will say, "because there isn't enough time and there isn't enough money and there are 18 hours a day to fill, etc." And that's the way it goes most of the time. We have some hysterical programming, too. We do have those hours to fill. But what clearly differentiates our organization, at least in a North American context, is that for major projects we do spend a great deal of time to try to have an underpinning philosophy and rationale, with clear-cut educational objectives. That doesn't mean, though, that those objectives have to be in a proselytizing vein, or that solutions are posed in a predetermined way.

Magda McHale queried, "What may be possible today because of what happened yesterday?" Really, she answered, the past is no longer quite as reliable a guide for the present, or for the future.

Considering modern communications, the only important thing is that we have the possibility of a sort of mass conversion. If Moses had had the possibility of television the world might be in the same mess, but much more would have been accomplished much quicker.

Commercial television is "very bad," including the violence saturation. It's possible, however, that people could become so oversaturated with violence that they would not want to commit it.

The effects of Archie Bunker are useful, and, in some way, have a much deeper effect than serious programs on the same topics. Such serious programs are boring, and, being so perfect, do not achieve much.

As to predicting futures, nobody really means to predict futures in the sense of seeking to achieve such perfection that no change is possible. It's like art. Art is kind of a surprise. What we need is that which will augment our activities rather than a firm prediction.

On the subject of alternative futures, we do need alternatives, but, also, we need the possibility of alterations.

Yoshikazu Sakamoto began with a confession. "I find myself in a rather awkward position because I am renowned for my very strong hostility to TV programs." Listening, however, to some of the self-criticism he had heard of TV achievements and lack of achievements, "I am quite encouraged to say something."

Agreeing that people should gain a greater control of the future, he felt that what is more important are the following three questions:

Control for what?
Control over what?
Control by whom?

These questions are felt to be more important since people today have much greater control over the future than ever before. What is more serious is the lack of consensus about the values to which future alternatives should be oriented; there is reason for concern because we should not expect that we can easily reach consensus on values.

There are many ways to categorize values. Whatever the way, however, we should set up a system of categories of our value orientations, as systematically as possible, so that we will not overlook significant perspectives which may not appear relevant to us but which are very important to people in the rest of the world.

Editor's note: With the aid of a chart, Dr. Sakamoto drew and commented on a matrix which, with some liberties, I have attempted to reproduce. I have numbered and lettered categories and subcategories to assist understanding of the commentary that will follow the matrix.

VALUES.....JUSTICE

PROBLEMS.....INJUSTICE

	(1) Security Peace	(2) Equity Well-Being	(3) Identity Self-Realization
(a) Personal Direct	Homicide Civil War War	Prejudice	Under-Education Mal-Education
(b) Structural Indirect	Malnutrition Starvation Short Life-Expectancy	Exploitation	Alienation
Control over What?	Violence	Material Resources	Information

The *basic value* is *justice*. The *basic problem* is injustice. Problems may be divided into the three subcategories:

1. *security and peace*, especially the problem of securing rights to the value of physical security
2. *equity and well-being*
3. *identity and self-realization*.

Each of these problems has two aspects or dimensions:

(a) *personal or direct*, e.g., the denial of (1) security and peace is seen in problems of homicide, civil war, and war;

(b) *structural or indirect*, e.g., the denial of (1) security and peace leads to problems of malnutrition, starvation, or short life-expectancy.

This pattern may be followed in reading the rest of the matrix, as in the following examples:

2(a) the denial of equity and well-being has a personal and direct consequence in the problem of prejudice; and

2(b) the denial of equity and well-being has a structural or indirect consequence in the problem of exploitation.

The three initial questions of control – for what? over what? and by whom? – may then be related to each of the three (horizontal) sub-categories. For example, to achieve the value of security and peace it is necessary to gain control over violence, and to achieve the value of equity and well-being it is necessary to gain control over material resources.

The major task of the communications media is to minimize the disparities and gaps in the distribution of values in the world.

Jack Porter. Last Wednesday, at 10:10 in the morning, I became, for the first time, a grandfather. A bouncing baby boy of 8 pounds, 13 ounces. And as I looked at him for the first time I thought, all right, you're zero in 1975, and you'll probably have a life-expectancy of at least 75 years. By the time you're 75 it will be 2050. And the wheels start turning. It's amazing how much more real it is when something like that happens . . . Now, we're going to have to improve, because I don't have the answers for my grandson.

We are highly hesitant as a group to try to tell other people what's good for them, and yet in everything said this morning we really do think we know what's good for them.

In my day, before we talked futures studies, we used to talk "reform." We didn't really try to reform the future. We kept examining the history. We looked at the present and we decided what was wrong with it and how it might be better. As we tried to think what was wrong with the present to make it better we had to think what that would do in the future. Should OECA be worrying quite so much about a special package for the future as it should about trying to do a little bit better job for the present?

The political action direction of the working paper is sound, but what we're sort of hoping is that somehow that guy and that girl out there, because of us, would just be a little better and would make wiser decisions.

The word moral hasn't been used this morning, but what we've been talking about is a form of morality. Justice versus injustice, some kind of right versus wrong, selflessness rather than selfishness. It's sharing, helping, and understanding. Thinking of the 1,000 graduates who will be leaving Sheridan College, we should be doing what will help them, and people like them, to make them more responsible citizens, so they will keep growing and developing. That, a little at a time, they will become less selfish, and when they join the community action group it won't be to keep the "housing-for-the-poor" out of their neighbourhood. That they will be more humane, and, somehow, will get a bigger charge out of life.

We in OECA have to do much more than the rest of the media. Control of the media is to be feared, but, at present, the media are doing a great job of telling everybody how to do all the wrong things. It's five months ago that the first holdup of a bank in Quebec took place, where they captured the bank manager's wife and held her for ransom; and of course the media made a big headline of it. You could almost count the days until the next one happened, and the next one. At last count there were eleven.

In our medium there has to be a more positive element, to do a bit with some of the people. Thinking, again, of the 1,000 graduates of Sheridan College, they're going to do something in this world for that grandson of mine and I hope they make it just a wee bit better than if they just don't give a damn. And I hope you can help me find the answers.

Ignacy Waniewicz. Alvin Toffler's story made him feel that he was "almost perfect material for a rabbi. I simply listen to each one of you individually and think, 'Oh, gosh, is he right.'"

He pointed to the perennial problem of vicious circles and their impact on the future of society.

We in OECA are close to completing a study of those adults in Ontario who are interested in learning on a part-time basis. Almost every other adult – in addition to those who are full-time students – is engaged in a deliberate learning activity or has the intention of getting engaged in such an activity in the near future. These people can substantiate their desire for learning by articulating what specifically they want to learn and by giving valid reasons for it. The results of the survey, however, confirm again the existence of vicious circles. It is the already educated who tend to want more education. The more a person is educated, the more he or she can be expected to be a learner, or at least a would-be-learner, and conversely, the poorly educated are the least engaged in learning and the least to express an interest in learning. The problem is how to break these vicious circles.

There are still millions of illiterates in this opulent and full-of-opportunities society, and, despite the effort of educators and all kinds of missionaries, they continue to remain illiterate.

The media may help. Particularly two-way communications. But even a one-way message can sometimes cause some internal chemistry to work. The main problem is, however, how to convey a certain kind of information if the desire for such information is not generated by the recipient. How does one generate this desire?

We have to find ways to help people, through the media, to find ways by which they can come to understand their own intentions, their own capabilities, their own willingness to change themselves, to change their relationships with the outside world.

John Platt said earlier that television is "the adrenalin of modern politics." That is true. The media made known to everybody, on a scale wider than ever hitherto, events which took place nationally and internationally, the marvellous things as well as the terrible things. This changed us, changed our values, changed our children. However, this happened not because the people who control the media wanted these changes to occur. It happened because the media were reflecting the things that happened. The question is how can we use the ubiquity of the media in a deliberate way to help people make deliberate decisions?

Lewis Auerbach emphasized that we aren't the first people to talk about the future, and it's not possible to arrive at any consensus, as some participants have suggested. It's well to remind ourselves that, however much we strive for rationality, there is an important role for intuition even in science. The so-called inductive leap is really a matter of intuition. And it's because intuition plays such a large role in thought about the future that we have so much disagreement. And intuition plays an important role in television.

Can the media singlehandedly create futures consciousness? Clearly not. At least OECA can't, unless it's part of a much larger process in which we are doing our little bit to contribute to the process. One has to take a manageable task as an individual, or as an institution, and to make some contribution to what one sees as a possible desirable future. And such decisions are largely based on value judgments and intuitions.

At the Science Council we have had a few off-the-record discussions about orienting the entire program around two themes, the first being a view of what will be the "conserver society," the other having to do with the meaning of "technological sovereignty." If the Science Council is seen then as a kind of futures organization, the idea is to use these themes to help formulate many of the questions that are asked in the more concrete futures studies undertaken. In these activities there is, even at the Science Council, recognition of the role of ethical values and the role of intuition. There is recognition of the value of individual decisions, and that if you sum them up they synergistically, as it were, do begin to make a difference. I view the OECA Futures Project as having similar goals. It should not be seen as a technological fix to the problem of educating people to futures consciousness.

Lewis Miller spoke as a member of OECA who has to share with other members the responsibility for whatever we might do in the Futures Project.

The working paper on basic philosophy is right in the sense that our primary concern is, in some sense, political. But this raises for us the problem that has been mentioned by some participants when they warned of the dangers of proselytizing. The concern of many of the participants has seemed to be for what John Stuart Mill referred to as "the greatest happiness principle," proposing a philosophy that took as its main principle the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. We in OECA have to understand the implications of this.

Mill's proposal to resolve value disputes was to rely on "competent judges"; but this in turn leads to the question, "who is to judge the judges?" We have to be mindful of the question posed by Saul Mendlovitz when he asked, how do we operationalize the term "accountability"?

In this workshop we are seeking advice, and we do have to come down to some brass tacks. Ultimately we're going to have to be to some extent arbitrary. We can't do it all, and we'll have to treat a number of issues that seem meaningful to us within current social problems and pressures. What, then, does a television producer do, and what are the issues that we can tackle meaningfully? This is the kind of question we are asking you. We have to be concerned with *content*, and with *method*. In these concerns Yoshi Sakamoto's questions seem very relevant. Finally, we have to be concerned with the *evaluation* of what we do, to ascertain to what extent we are or are not achieving our project objectives.

Ran Ide was the final speaker in the first morning's plenary session.

What are the expectations of OECA for this particular meeting? Certainly, we have a very specific purpose. We wanted to identify content for some kind of communications project that would, we hope, utilize electronic and other associated media in such a way that it would be sufficient to make a positive difference in society. This is not to say that if we become too general we won't succeed. However, we have to become reasonably specific.

This is not to say that we ignore the need to examine value questions, or the ethical base on which our society exists. As educators we have to be concerned with the needs of education. An educated person should be critically intelligent, sensitive to the needs of other people, and should possess the qualities to discuss fundamental value questions. Everything we do has to have that in mind.

OECA does not intend to limit itself to the Futures Project. There may be another term for it, but within the organization we know what it means. We know what society is facing, what the world is facing. It's facing significant challenges, identified by such terms as disparity, growth, population, food, etc. These are huge issues, but they are relatively specific. And they are issues with which we can deal, to translate them into some kind of format which may be able to make a difference. We will not be deterred in this by value questions. We will be doing this project.

The electronic media are exceptionally powerful. We're not sure yet that we understand them. We understand print better, but print has been around a lot longer. Television certainly has a tremendous impact on society; but relatively few people have attempted to use television in a constructive sense. We in OECA have made this attempt. OECA is a small organization, but that doesn't mean that it's ineffective. We are currently planning to build another 18 stations and would have a 19-station network throughout Ontario in television alone. We can't compete for audiences with commercial stations. Yet there are almost three-quarters of a million people in the Toronto area who watch our first station, Channel 19, on a regular basis, and they watch us on an average of at least five times weekly. So, whether some of its programs are boring or not, there are audiences there. It has a power of reaching a lot of people. Whether it has a power of involving them is another question, and we're working on that.

Do we want to deal with specifics? Yes, even though those specifics may themselves be immense. We hope that this may be kept in mind when we go into our groups to look at the proposed questions that Lewis Auerbach has prepared.

8. Written Comments on Basic Philosophy

The working paper on Basic Philosophy, Purposes, and Themes of the OECA Futures Project was sent to all participants in advance of the workshop. The following responses, now with minimal editing, were received by James Dator.

Andrew Baines, 29 April 1975

First I will answer the specific questions [asked in the covering letter inviting comments on the basic philosophy of the Futures Project].

1. The political focus is clear.
2. Helping people to increase their knowledge and control over their own future(s) is liable to produce unexpected results; not likely to produce tangible results since the results are not those expected; likely to make those doing it feel important.
3. "Is the political focus realistic?" If you are asking "Can a television network make man free?" then the answer is no.

Political focus was characteristic of the 60s. At its worst it was an attempt by a few Messianic souls to impose their utopia using social engineering and advertising techniques. At its mundane it was and is another way of saying man is a political gregarious social animal. It is possible to be an explorer without being a missionary. Missionaries work to create their ideals. Some explorers, no doubt, were like so-called value-free technicians or scientists. Value-free and value-laden exploration were both dangerous and created disequilibrium. Given the unpredictable results of disturbing a system as complex as society, it is wisest to ensure the greatest flexibility of response. Flexibility is not the missionaries' forte (one can be a missionary for the church of value-free science).

I would like to explore the motives of the producers and people like yourself. Why are they (we) interested in this subject? Attitudes, values, morals, etc., change with time. They will be deficient in the future. Can we modify the future by altering attitudes and values? Are these the most powerful techniques for controlling the future? If they are, who is controlling whose future?

4. What can one say about the basic philosophy that wasn't said by Ptolemy on the subject of motherhood and 5¢ cigars?
5. Fundamental purpose
   1) Good
   2) – Ideas and metaphors may be good, slogans are bad
      – Information is always biased
      – How can a TV network provide access to information and channels of communication, etc.?

   It would be useful to consider this position of your report carefully. It is not easy to envisage OECA acting as a multichannel feedback system – it is a one-way medium. The limitations of the TV technique are not considered. There is no thought given to the strengths and weaknesses of the medium to be used. To have television – educational, or otherwise – playing with political structures seems very dangerous. Politics requires rapid response. TV has an enormous lag time.
6. Themes
   1) Images – good
   2) and 3) Trends and Counter Trends are one set
   4) Colonizers, etc. – good
   5) Anticipatory Democracy is a slogan – bad. Slogans are used by the lazy to mask their ignorance while stating that they belong to a select group of cognoscenti.
7. Overall tasks
   1) Good
   2) I'm skeptical about this part of the project
   3) This is utopian or worse
   4) No comment
   5) Missionary
   6) Missionary (some religions are good sometimes for some people)

In summary, my greatest interest lies in the political nature of the project and in the motives and goals of the producers.

Ray Jackson, 17 April 1975

Here are some comments on your preliminary statement. The aim of people gaining greater control over their own futures (with which I thoroughly agree as a suitable theme) is more clearly stated in your letter than in the Statement. The Statement seems already to take some things for granted, e.g., the existing systems and technologies, a participation in many kinds of communications, a kind of integrated "global-village" society. I can't pin down any particular words or phrases that give me that impression and, strictly, everything that I would suggest has been allowed for in your script. Perhaps it is just a matter of *ordering* – the priorities that appear to be implicit in some things being mentioned first and others last.

The desirable directions in line with your theme, or perhaps even prerequisites, strike me in my present

mood as being (a) the development of tools and ways of living that build greater resilience into society through greater individual or group self-sufficiency and independence (I can only vote as a free man if I can tell the system to go to hell – just as Jefferson's farmer could), and (b) the development of social systems that will allow me to be highly selective in my communications and use of information – and that will work nevertheless. What is behind that last item is my concern regarding the possibility of a kind of psychic breakdown under the constant stress of too much information, too much excitement, activity, and distraction – too high a noötic temperature. I know people tend to move to the cities for the excitement, and they turn on their radios full-time to CHUM for the same reason, but they are not aware of what it is doing to them. It is like getting hooked on coffee – there comes the day of reckoning. Now, what the future holds for the human race, I don't know, but I can think of the following prospects:

1. the evolution, by survival of the fittest, of an urban adapted race for whom that jazzed-up butterfly state of mind is the normal condition
2. the development of psychological techniques of survival by tuning-in and tuning-out, e.g., techniques of meditation or of insulating oneself from the ambient (this might be extremely difficult if one has to cope with psychic fields as well as physical)
3. the evolution of living patterns that alternate periods of urban activity with periods of rural retreat
4. the lowering of the total social-industrial-communications temperature (if this is even *feasible* in urban concentrations; otherwise, by de-concentration of population)
5. the psychic exhaustion and decline of present urban civilizations, their temporary replacement by others, or perhaps the replacement of the whole urban idea by something else (not bloody likely).

What all this amounts to is, in part, a questioning of the idea that more communication is better – a suggestion that tends to be antithetical to the institutional goals of OECA. However, it may be that we could suggest new formats, new styles. (Slow images? – maybe Warhol was onto something.) I agree that current educational systems, with all their busywork, tend to be part of the problem. Can OECA offer an alternative, or only intensify the distraction?

Another question: Do you wish to reach the leaders, or potential leaders, or to condition those who will be the followers, i.e., to prepare the ground? Are the materials the same?

One paper that I have been recommending is enclosed. It is "La Société Inflationniste" by Bertrand de Jouvenel. It helps understand the present (and possibly some features of the future) by looking at the past – mostly economics.

Lewis Miller, 23 May 1975

Here, tardily, are a few comments on your paper of March 24. Being sparse, and questioning, these comments will appear perhaps negative while my mood and motives are positive. I did enjoy reading your paper.

You ask if concrete examples are needed concerning the themes, and, as a sometime broadcaster, I would have welcomed some. I appreciate that there will be some 'leafing out' of the branches of your tree during the workshop, and at some point some writing and production team will have to do their own leafing. I hope that our directions will be reasonably clear.

I had to pause in my reading, on the dichotomy drawn between "human" and "technological." I'm not sure of my ground here but, anyway, I shall set down my "off the top of the head" thoughts. The implication seems to be that 'technology' has gone beyond 'human' control, and I wonder if this is so. There is, I suppose, a sense in this if we accept the Marxian doctrine that the economic system 'determines' the 'consciousness' of those within the system, or the McLuhan tenet that "the medium is the message"; but this would appear to be to stretch the meaning of the word "technology." Is this the intention? In narrower senses of the word, referring to the media and machinery used, or the method of the educational technologist, certainly much 'technology' has gone beyond my control, or the control of most individuals I know, but is it not still "subservient" to the control of some humans? And since our human concern in the workshop is to come up with the means to use the technology (hard-sense) within the disposal of OECA, in a technological (soft-sense) way, do we not have to bring the dichotomous terms together?

The underlying question that emerges from this, and throughout the paper, is the political one, and you clearly say and emphasize that our project "has a political purpose." Why is it felt, from one point of view, that technology has not been subservient to human needs and desires, when, from another point, the technology seems very much to have been subservient to the wishes and desires of some humans who have done so well, at least financially, by ordering it and controlling it? (If, of course, we

accept the broadest connotation of the word suggested earlier, Marx and McLuhan, then even the 'masters' are 'subservient' to the media.) In assuming a dichotomy are we not doing so on political rather than etymological grounds? And if we in OECA are to take some kind of political stance how can we be assured of the appropriateness (a weasel word for "rightness") of our stance? I'm reminded of the basic question asked of Mill's theory of moral philosophy, "who is to judge the judges?"

This is enough for now. I look forward to the workshop.

Lewis Perelman, 16 April 1975

By now you should have received copies of my report on "Growth and Education." I believe that you can induce my answers to most of the questions you have raised about your Futures Project from that report, so I will keep my remarks here fairly brief.

You asked in your letter whether the "political focus" was clearly stated and important. I believe that it is important, but is stated far more clearly and effectively in the attached precis of philosophy, etc., than in your letter. Specifically, I like the statements on page 2 of the precis.

The themes you have stated are OK, but I must say frankly that they did not strike me powerfully or excite my imagination. They probably could be presented in a stimulating way, but it is not clear to me exactly how that would be done, nor is there any hint of that in these documents. I guess my reaction is colored by my own prejudices and sense of priorities. As suggested in my report, I feel that the two most important themes relevant to the goal of your project are *changing images of man*, and *new standards of competency*. These could be subsumed within your five themes, but I see little explicit indication that they have been or would be.

Jim, your proposals warrant extensive comment, but I feel that anything I might say about them is already contained in my report. The goals of that project were essentially the same as those of yours, so the analysis and recommendations should be quite relevant. If you will send a mailing list of the participants in the OECA conference, to my colleague Nancy Barber at WICHE, I am sure she will be happy to send copies of the report to all. Also, we are having printed an extensive bibliography and a resource directory of people and institutions involved in relevant teaching and research. When these are ready you will certainly receive copies, and there should be no problem eventually making these documents available to all participants.

I have no other specific references to recommend, except perhaps the Stanford Research Institute report on *Changing Images of Man*. There are a number of new TV programs on our PBS which I think would be of interest to you and the OECA staff and relevant to your project. First is a series called *Nova* of which I would particularly recommend for viewing two episodes: one entitled *The Plutonium Connection* and the other on the work of E. F. Schumacher. Another excellent PBS series is on *Solar Energy*; the first episode provides an overview. And our local public station in Denver, KRMA, has produced a fine series called *Feedforward*.

I look forward to seeing you in May.

John Platt, 1 May 1975

Your metaphors always turn me on. Last sentence of your letter of March 27 (with the Futures Project Prospectus) has me replying "with as much dispatch as you can muster." My vision was of this enormous piece of dispatch, like Siamese quinquetuplets lined up in a row at "Present Arms," being mustered in.

Actually my comments aren't all that long. I think the Basic Philosophy is excellent. Can I restate it, in my own terms?:

- A *systems-view* of the world and everything that needs to be done, at every level – out of which you pull
- *What only the media can do* or can do best; which means going beyond entertainment and news to
- *Education for alternative futures*, and
- *Structures for self-education and self/society-transform*.

I see TV as the principal carrier of consciousness-raising through issue-debate; which is the greatest mechanism today for adult education and self-organizing political change-action. Examples: U.S. civil rights movement, anti-war, ecology, consumerism, population, women's liberation, limits to growth, futures. See my papers which I think I sent to you on "Information Networks for Human Transformation" and "Universities as the Nerve Centers of Society" (first half).

I didn't think your Themes were related to each other or grew out of the philosophy in any clear way. They weren't "symmetrical" with each other, or "closed"; but perhaps that is an old-fashioned idea, and not necessary; and they do build up to Involvement, if presented sequentially. I guess my "neat" pattern would have been more like: Trends, Constructive and Destructive; Goals – What Would a Good Sustainable Society Be?; Alternative Futures; and Transition Paths; Making Structures for On-Going (Cybernetic) Democratic Choice and Creation. But I can think of a dozen more ways to carve it up. I did like your terms,

Colonizers and the Colonized; Mead says it is a greater change between the generations than moving to a new country; could this metaphor be extended to the other components? I also like Anticipatory Democracy – like my old metaphor of a wagon-train of pioneers moving into unknown country, needing scouts, and maps, and arguing all the way, but sticking together for survival.

Overall Tasks: May I suggest some specifics, which I am sure are already in your lists:

Open University

Consciousness-Raising Issues Programs. Local Clubs and Conferences tied in to TV, videotape, workbooks: Ecology, Consumerism, Women, Limits, Futures, World Development, Science Threats and Promises (O'Neill Space Colonies?), Alternative Technologies, Alternative Life Styles, Birth Control, Sustainable Society, etc.

Radical Software. Decentralized portable video in communities, for self-awareness of problems, decentralization, linkage between ethnics, diversity of Canadian and world society, exchange and feedback to public figures . . .

Tape and Cable for Political Broadening and Involvement

Tape and Cable for Self-Education at the Individual and Home Level

Tape and Cable for Neighborhood and Social Improvement. Examples of Child Care, Change Groups, Non-Violent Problem-Solving, Cases of Better City Government, Better Business-Employee Relations, Possible Group Therapies (such as Transactional Analysis, Transcendental Meditation, or Behavior Modification Postive Reinforcement Methods), Family Clusters or Successful Communes, Religious Groups for Change. (I see this feeding into local church or school or neighborhood groups as a motivational powerhouse for turning them to parallel action, sense of participation, being needed, making more coherent and enjoyable self-determining communities.)

I hope you have a good library in your group, of all the offbeat publications that are relevant: *Radical Software, Cosmic Mechanix, Futures Conditional* (Theobald), *Village One* (Berkeley), *Community Information Expositions* (AAAS), *Community Participation* (Open Univ.), *Undercurrents* and *Appropriate Technology* (London), *Behaviordelia* Publications (Kalamazoo), *Transition* (Inst. for World Order), . . . I could bring or send copies of any of these you don't have, or their mastheads, so you could order subscriptions.

Jack Porter, 4 April 1975

I read your proposals and found them most fascinating but I am not prepared yet to answer them in the specific ways that you have requested. However, in the meantime my initial reaction:

(a) I was not surprised to see that you are suggesting a basic theme far broader and more sociologically and politically oriented than any of the specific elements such as conserver society, ecology, etc. Having spent a week with you in Dubrovnik I think I could have predicted this, and basically I agree with you. I think however you have selected the most difficult and as you indicate, dangerous basic philosophy that we could come up with but I don't feel that we should back away from it because of its difficulties.

(b) You asked for a reaction to the themes or suggestions for other themes. At this point I cannot suggest others and I think my reaction to the five you suggest is reasonably positive, but I have one slight hang-up. I have the feeling that the titles of the themes are not descriptive enough of their intention. In a sense, they are a little "professorial" and from my point of view should be stated in more basic language. I can here you say: "O.K. Porter, what words would you use" and this is where my excuse is that I am charging off to England. Maybe wisdom will reach me at 35,000 feet.

(c) I am not ready as yet (and I am not sure I will ever have the competence) to suggest the leaves and fruits for the branches of your tree; but I will keep thinking about it.

Aubrey Singer, 30 April 1975

Anything that I say to you I say from the point of view of a television producer and a television executive. In your terms you might call me a "media man," but being precise about these things, I only know one medium – namely, that of visual images. However, don't be misled by this because I also firmly believe that a word is worth ten thousand pictures!! One only has to switch off the sound on a film projector or on a television set to see how "unvisual" the medium really is. Having got rid of that flight of fancy, let me say that I think my standpoint at the seminar will be the standpoint of a television impresario wondering how to get your message across.

Now I'm a square! I happen to believe that the best way of studying the future is through the past and

this, of course, is called "history." Any Futures Project should therefore, in my opinion, start off by measuring the success of past prophecies against actual historical performance. From there one could graduate to an outline of the problems ahead as seen from today, and after this the development is much trickier. After all, the reason why the Pythoness at Delphi always spoke in such vague generalization is the same reason why one tends to lose on certainties at race courses. I do not believe that "futurologists" have any more certainty about the future than a well organized punter at a race track.

It is, therefore, very important that any series of programs or any messages about the future should start off with this caveat. In my terms, if this caveat is not clearly stated at several levels, then the credibility of the broadcasting organization is at hazard. To succeed in our project we must protect the one asset that we broadcasters treasure above all others.

Ideally, I would like to see us isolate thirteen crucial areas for study. For instance, Resources, Population, Environment, Communication, Energy, Food, etc. It should be possible to make a major television series out of these, supported by books and films, cassettes (both sound and video). In my opinion, the initial approach to this main thrust should be historical.

One could then follow this up with a second series of programs which reviews the situation as seen today and indicates possible futures. So far plain sailing!

At this stage the role of the broadcaster changes. In addition to being the channel for massing information and indicating the situation, he should open his air time so that groups can claim access to discuss the possible futures. It may well be that in order to give more access (it is more prolific and cheaper), radio should be used for these discussions far more than television, but perhaps with television supporting by distilling and illustrating the best and liveliest of these radio discussions. More than this I don't think I can say at the moment. It is an outline plan for a presentation of possible futures and encouraging viewer and listener response and participation. I am sorry if it is a plan in the vaguest terms, but really I would like to hear what you experts have to say about the future before I commit myself any further. This is not to say I am not prepared to carry on this dialogue before the seminar, but I hope at least that this gives some indication of my thinking and I hope it will indicate a way forward when we know roughly what ought to be communicated.

Some further thoughts however. My own experience indicates that if you are going to do major series or major programs, the best way to start is *ad hominem*. We should be encouraging our futurologists to think of the best people in their fields to present the various programs. The more they are left to the broadcaster's impartiality, the less impact these programs will have. The more they are an idiosyncratic point of view, the more powerful they will be.

One last word of warning. I firmly believe that the strength of an idea is in its limitations. Certainly this applies to television. It is better to do a program on a limited theme than embrace a very generalized approach. The generalizations of prediction militate against this principle.

There is not much more I can say. I enclose a biography. The only piece I am known for is a talk on Science and Television and an article in *The American Scholar* which are many years out of date. However, I have certain monuments with which I was connected – namely, Alistair Cooke's *America*; *The Ascent of Man*; the development of scientific broadcasting within BBC television. Within the framework of experience I have gained in the BBC, I hope I will be of some use to you in this interesting venture.

David Walker, 4 April 1975

You are a brave man. Circulation of an ideology is certain to squeeze abstractions from the driest stick.

The comments below are more about ways to make the content of the ideas accessible than about the ideas themselves, which will become clearer in planned examination of the themes. The comments may find some use in conceptualization, but more use in arranging that examination and in arriving at early acceptance not only of what you do, but of how what you do is perceived.

Considerations

- The project will be experienced by different cultures.
- The projects should be immediately involving.
- The projects are a process, designed to be open-ended.
- Though open-ended, the process has to have signposts, checkpoints, to enable individuals to assess their commitment, satisfaction.
- Individual satisfaction in this context cannot derive from success in win-lose situations built into the process (the ideology rules against such situations).
- To be immediately involving, the individual has to see a clear return to him, rather than government or commercial interest, though those may follow as extensions of his action.

- Though the process is open-ended, the creators and users must view the initiating sponsor's financial commitment as having outer limits, based on what participants, rather than sponsors do.
- In all probability, then, the process has the character of a movement, and might be conceived from what is known of movements (ideology, centres of support, strategies of extension).
- Movements are open to distrust, political attack, cultural misunderstandings. These may be distributed by the same processes the project uses.
- To what degree is this movement to be viewed as individualism, collectivism?

Possible ways to deal with these considerations

- Consider how the philosophy, purpose and themes would be viewed by this and other cultures.
- Prepare Cartesian, Marxist, rationales of the philosophy to go along with the conceptualization and introduction of the project.
- Alternatively, assemble definitions of terms, using quotations from a catholic spectrum of ideological materials.
- Study, or commission a study, of movements attempting to return power to the people and make the results known to those who work on the project, possibly to the project participants (the trends may do this job). Consider medical education in China, Opus Dei, Oxford Movement-Moral Rearmament-Up With People, Transcendental Meditation, Citizens' Forum. Farm Forum, Black Muslims, Harrington, Keniston, Lifton, Cox, Mandelstam.
- Planning should consider what the Chairman of the EBU Radio Programme Committee said to a Belgrade symposium on the future of radio last fall: "Moralists, educators, marketing experts and ideologists are joining hands all over the world to create television programming that can be characterized as 'enlightened despotism.' " Planners should examine the program content section of Albert Namurois, *Memorandum on direct television broadcasting by satellite and the legal norms for its use*, EBU Review, 26, 1, p. 68.
- Consideration might be given to publication of commissioned articles on the variety of response to the issues in various political environments. A model might be the CBC Massey lectures, *The Real World of Democracy*.
- A coalition of organizations might be assembled by the sponsors with a view to the above considerations. This coalition might create an endowment to pool contributions from governments and foundations for continuance of what is begun by the project. Essential in the formation of such a coalition would be early identification of a charismatic person around which this could happen. This assumes initial sponsors will disengage, but that expectations will have been raised.
- Advice might be sought, once programming plans are more complete, on the degree to which the project is "propagandistic." A possible source is Leonard Doob.
- Consideration might be given to contribution of fiction writers: Azimov would take the project over, given half a chance. However, beyond picturing utopias, such creative insights have intuitive dimensions that bridge gaps between individual and collective action, can address questions such as "What's in it for me?" Answers obviously lead to involvement.
- Kazin and others have recently raised the question posed by the holocaust: can those sensitive to the "values and perceptions of others" survive? In this context, what is "relevant" action? Radical Christianity (Baum?) might take surprising positions here. Planning thus should consider institutionalized, non-political ideologies (*Man at the Center: Man Alive; Learning to Be*) in the provision of "structures which facilitate their realizing their desired futures."
- Can the full implications of structuralist approaches be useful in planning a project which, to have lasting effect, has to have meaning for those with "clear" political futures as well as those who are much less certain, though perhaps more humanistic?
- Finally, the dean of the Penn. Annenberg School, George Gerbner (*Explorations in Communications*) discusses publication as a general social process which is the basis of community consciousness. This, I assume, is precisely the OECA role in this project. Hewing to the very considerable limits this role provides, and assigning other aspects of the project to others will be crucial to its economic and social management.

9. Study Group Reports

The following reports by the three study group rapporteurs (Norman White, Andrew Baines, and Ray Jackson), written in the late-evening and early-morning hours of the final two days, are, in effect, abstracts of the advice offered and the questions posed by all of the workshop participants.

Group A: The Purpose
Rapporteur: Norman White

Preamble. Although the group considered a number of concrete nuclear issues (including the war system, violence, source distribution, ecological balance, and human rights) as a means of focussing discussion, the following synthesis is deliberately limited to the statement of a single idea that concerns the process by which these things may be addressed within the framework of an "alternative futures" project. For reasons that hopefully will emerge from this primitively articulated elaboration of a very tangled discourse, the report does not include a list of new metaphors or scenarios.

The strategic approach to an Alternative Futures Project may usefully be based on a number of assumptions. The first among these is that the eventual effect will be to enable people to have more influence in determining their destiny. A second is that their learning how to do this will entail methods and perceptions of which not only they, but we, are largely unaware. As a corollary, it would appear that conventional didactic instruction is inadvisable (or impossible) because the content is as yet unavailable. Ultimately, what is to be sought is an increase of the project audience's control of decision-making that affects the shape and quality of their social and physical environment.

It is desirable, not simply as a concession to participatory democracy, but as a means by which talent can be marshalled, to include as many people as possible in the business of designing how such control can occur. The intent is to tap the creative potential of people who are ordinarily inaccessible by dint of inarticulateness, social position, or existential default. The emphasis is on the conception, gestation, and careful nurturing of social inventions. These inventions are devices to be employed in the solution of problems which are perceived to be a part of alternative futures and of transitions to these futures. Since the nature of these futures, the problems they entail, and the means by which solutions should be devised cannot now be stated with any comprehensive clarity, a prior invention, a META-INVENTION, is required to bring this about. That is, the role of the project is to promote and support the development of a PROCESS by which its audience can evolve a collection of techniques which will lead to a self-perpetuating succession of social inventions.

In a broad sense, the mission is plainly political. Structurally, it is a communications network, the novelty of which resides in the fact that its structure is itself largely in the hands of the people communicating within it. The role of its supporting agency, therefore, is that of resource and facilitator. Without violating the original principles of this proposition, the project cannot wholly control the functions of system once it is operating. Its technical infrastructure, with hardware and expertise, would participate as a part of the system.

As envisaged in this scheme, the process would begin with a number of parallel activities:

- a presentation of scenarios, both utopian and dystopian, accompanied by a description of the obstacles which lie between us and the utopian, and the hazards which lead to the dystopias
- a critical examination of these presentations by
  (a) debate between disagreeing experts
  (b) challenge of experts by non-experts
- comparison of the scenarios as they would be concocted by other similar agencies around the world, e.g., the same program done in Tokyo, Stockholm, and New Delhi
- portrayal of other ways that are already in use to solve social conflict and/or to devise solutions to social problems
- exposure/debate of the assumptions and prejudices which govern our thinking about our presents and futures
- an invitation to the audience to take part in an exercise of inventing solutions
- soliciting an agenda from the audience, i.e., progressively building the exercise around a public perception of goals, problems, and questions
- construction of a feedback network so that agendas, inventions, and perceptual warps can be considered, judged, revised, acted on, and used to change the direction of these projects

In order to develop the potential of people to influence decision-making, it is necessary to do two things: to give them the experience/confidence/skill of actually doing it, and to alter their expectations/perspectives by simply exposing them to the fact that there are alternatives. This of course implies participation programming, but taken one step further – that is, delivering to the audience the opportunity to decide what it is they will participate in.

There are certain thematic conflicts inherent in the tactics of program design, for example, whether topics should be local or global in scope, whether solutions should be abstractly conceptual or operationally concrete, and whether the focus ought to be on the process of problem-solving or on the content of the solutions. It is suggested that these tensions themselves should be addressed as part of the transitional dynamic. Also included should be an apprehension of the trap that exists in the possibility of being co-opted by our own visions, the hazard of the helpless disillusionment that results from unattainable expectations.

The object is to turn the audience into inventors. In effect, they are no longer an audience. They have been assisted to build/constitute an expanded cognitive network which becomes an arena and workshop within which their energies are released. Whether programs are interactive is not secondary-process at all! The basic idea is that the viewer/participant *can* affect the future.

All of this is not to say that there is not a place for information. Part of the resource-supplying function of the project would be to sensitize people to imminent and long-range disaster and to expose them to visions of some preferred alternatives. A special responsibility of the project consists, however, in the opportunity to encourage an intuitive assault on the preconceptions and mother's knee certainties which govern our view of the present. The most exciting possibility of all would be in the support of folk-theatre – the manipulation of political metaphors as an art form.

The articulated goals of the project are worthwhile: the question of feasibility should be addressed to the means. Since we are speaking of process in preference to content and since the problems by definition are broad and long-term, the avowed purpose of the project is as pertinent to Ontario as to Buenos Aires or Topeka. OECA should not have a "position" on the future, but should seek to develop a public "position" – and is likely, thereby, to be "colonized" by the concerns it generates. And so it should be. Enlightened despotism is a possibility, but only as a perversion of the process, because it is inviting its audience to learn control of all political apparatus, which includes itself. The link between the political purpose of this project and the political system is the activities and perception of all the people taking part in it.

Group B: The Means
Rapporteur: Andrew Baines

The Problem

We perceive a linear historical process which has undergone a gradual or sudden fragmentation presenting us with buzzing confusion. Our desire is to impose order, to recognize patterns, to filter out the noise so that we may manipulate events to reach globally acceptable futures.

Popular concepts of time and space have been forced to change by the state of contemporary society. Popular paradigms and modes of organization such as market economics, free enterprise, war, etc., may be outmoded. Newer concepts could, if they were made available to a broader audience, facilitate the process of social invention. Examples of these paradigms or models are non-zero-sum games, relativity, probability, quantum leaps or transformations, planning, alternative futures, systems, contingency. Others must and will develop. OECA should create an environment receptive to them.

Concepts, filters, paradigms, help one sift meaning from noise. These filters operate at the individual level and at the organizational level. For the individual they are modes of organizing experience, for the organization such as OECA, they may be monitoring groups or individuals either within or consultant to the Authority. The paradigm we found most useful was pattern recognition in a complex system.

The Approach

Some of us believe the laissez faire approach will work. With an open, questioning mind, we may muddle through. Others are less optimistic. The optimists (or conservatives) suggest a two-pronged attack. First, a journalistic one in which the job is to provide the public with relevant facts and opinions on all sides. Second, to provide newer concepts, paradigms, modes of thinking and attitudes. Paradigms were seen here in two senses: as broad abstractions and as specific examples, e.g., alternative models of world order.

With the information and concepts we hope that people will demonstrate the confidence to design and implement alternative presents and futures.

The pessimists see current problems reaching crisis proportions so rapidly that we do not have the luxury of waiting for information and new modes of thinking to create a society able to avoid disaster. In the pessimist's view the time is ripe

for development of social movements. The media could (should?) help catalyze the union of concerned groups. Thoughts of agitational propaganda or commercials for a point of view flitted across the conservatives' minds but were banished because even the most optimistic are perturbed by the possible futures they see.

The Means

It is apparent to all that TV by itself is inadequate to the task of conveying the interconnections and interdependency of the system. TV is part of a process. It can provide a common experience which in the hands of a teacher, coordinator, or social animator may spark useful group inquiry.

Methods through which this group experience can be mimicked in the home were sought. Alvin Toffler's plan for a cross-impact analysis of public opinion using print, radio, telephone, and TV leading to political action was thought worthy of closer examination. Other suggestions are listed below.

Formats

1. A big series of programs internationally produced and designed as a major occasion, perhaps focussed on the U.N. debate on world economic order.
2. TV games – computer games. Audience participation games should be non-zero-sum. Endings of dramas could be gamed by telephone. Two day-long games with folk heroes as participants could be created on the basis of possible future scenarios.
3. Jackdaws – a very stirring idea from McHale for an archaeological dig for materials of the present planted for the occasion.
4. Drama – open-ended. Fiction versus reality. The M.A.S.H. view of war versus the reality (the latter undefined).
5. Clubs – existing or nascent may be organized according to states of mind, as well as to territory.
6. Public Access TV.
7. Open University.
8. Provide references – to books, papers, etc., in dead time between programs.
9. Discuss the Global Connection. A matrix of topics to be discussed from at least three interacting points of view: historical, present, and future.

The Audience

It may be a select group or an elite, but if it is, understand it and examine it carefully. It could be any audience if you choose the format with care: the sports fan, the young, or the intellectual.

Answers to Specific Questions

1. Provide imaginative television; allow the producer freedom. Pay the researcher more than the producer.
2. Provide not necessarily glossy printed material (see above).
3. Community viewing groups were poorly received in England. Help people to think rationally and creatively. Social criticism seemed more important even than futures study.
4. OECA should ensure internal
& monitoring. A person or group
5. asking awkward questions about overall systemic linkages.

Sponsor a monthly digest of world wide organizations loosely grouped as futures study organizations. This will provide the filter to catch significant patterns as they appear. It may be necessary to sponsor some futures research in order to share in the produce of the grapevine.

We did not approach the question of relative priorities, thinking this could only be done by careful cost benefit study.

We did believe it possible to provide information in the absence of recipient demand. (See above for techniques.)

Aphorisms

If you have a simple point to convey, don't dance it. Pattern Recognition helps one stay sane.

The weatherman is the only person who routinely uses history, the present, and the probable future in his analysis.

If we are thinking systems we don't think in individual modes such as TV or radio. Clip the Claws and let them Paw. The systems approach detraumatizes the individual and permits local dialects and cultures to exist.

The elite should not be disparaged.

The topic doesn't matter, the matrix is the subject.

The Global Connection.

Questions

What is the function of news?

What is the function of the connection? Why make connections?

Can you make peace exciting?

What are the motives of public television?

Does it foster convergent or divergent social change; does it create a sense of belonging?

Group C: The Content
Rapporteur: Ray Jackson

Images

1. The images of science fiction, e.g., H. G. Wells, Heinlein, Orwell – but where are the novels that portray the desirable futures and/or those that portray technology as good?
2. History moves in cycles – Ecclesiastes.
3. History moves by accident and fate – Hindu.
4. History moves by evolution and steady growth – 19th-century industrialism.
5. The saltatory theory of history.
6. The world as a place to be developed – Duddy Kravitz.
7. Other images from the movies, e.g., "Chinatown," "Easy Rider," "2001."
8. The popularity of *Chariots of the Gods* – people's expectation of being rescued by advanced beings.
9. Optimism in India, pessimism in the United States.
10. Reaching into the past for an image of the future – inflation in Germany in the twenties.
11. A Marxist ideological future as seen by some European students.
12. A capitalistic European image – apparently motivated mostly by the middle-class feeling the squeeze and seeking a new role.
13. Neo-Marxist Anarchist – communal, egalitarian, self-sufficient, small groups in isolation.
14. Economic growth image patched up, e.g., by a guaranteed annual income for the poor.
15. An American student image. The 19th-century system builders and their descendants, the current experts, do not have the answers – the answers must be sought deeper down (Creativity 1).
16. Image of a spiritual transition (W. I. Thompson).
17. A world politics image: rise of new powers; new power conflicts; Dror's "crazy states."
18. Other European visions – e.g., Bougslaw, *The New Utopians*.

Trends

1. The closing in of the world – ecology, pollution, resource limits, social costs, the constraints of technological organization.
2. The consequent trend toward a sustainable global society – if we don't kill ourselves first.
3. Two watersheds: TV approaches 50% of world coverage; multinational corporations approach production of half the world's goods.
4. Trend to decentralization: smaller national units; small self-sufficient communities.
5. Stresses of political readjustment of responsibilities between different levels.
6. Crises of leadership – possible Orwellian or Heilbronnerian futures.
7. Nuclear escalation.
8. Growing conflict between liberal causes – the rights of women conflict with the seniority rights gained by labour unions.
9. Possible trend to shorter work week to open up jobs for women, young people, and older people.
10. Trends in large-scale crime beyond national jurisdictions.
11. New trends in crime associated with new technologies, e.g., computers.
12. The planning of space colonies.
13. Trend to the dispersion of education through life – education, leisure, work no longer restricted to fixed age periods.
14. The universities moving toward the education of the entire community.
15. The trend to breakdown of world political and economic system.
16. The changing world climate.
17. The rising price of energy.
18. Changing attitudes toward science and technology – the dethronement of science from certainty.
19. Paradigm shifts in scientific knowledge, e.g., arising out of cosmology, ESP, discovery of life on Mars.
20. Trends in universities toward the breaking down of disciplines.
21. Counter-trend toward reinforcing boundaries and retaining science as esoteric knowledge.
22. Rising crisis in education: diminishing public funds, rising public expectations, institutional protectionism, pressure from students.
23. Trends in educational technology – increasing use by students, against institutional resistance.

24. Inflation of grades – attempt to maintain standards in contest with attitude of a "right to credentials."
25. Aging trend in the population – the sixties generation moving into positions of power.
26. Crisis in the universities – rising numbers seeking professorial posts but declining enrolments and static staff establishments.
27. Growing pressure from the Third World for economic power.
28. Rising problem of information overload.

Colonizers and Colonized

It is difficult to capture this part of the discussion which attempted to grapple with such questions as who makes the decisions that tend to determine our future, and which decisions colonize the future the more rigidly or the farther ahead. For example, large capital investments involve large-scale planning, large-scale installations, but, even so, some are regarded as opening opportunities rather than locking us in. We can recognize that decisions should attempt to conserve or maximize options rather than close them off, and that decision-making can be aided by analytical techniques such as technology assessment, environmental impact statements, and computer modelling. One concern is how to make people approach their colonizing of the future with a more responsible attitude. One suggestion was to insist that decision-makers be cryogenically frozen at one stage of their life and thawed out one hundred years later to live in the future they had created. Another suggestion was that the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation could have a similar effect. A more modest suggestion was that people should have children.

It seems to be agreed that people must be unabashed at accepting some values on which to act and on which to assume the future will act. A set of goals was proposed, best described as being written by a Protestant cybernetic ist, and the discussion of these led the writer to believe that, in such a set, there might be found reasonably wide agreement in a Western democracy.

Anticipatory Democracy

This was designed to identify some people or groups who, in their own lives, are experimenting with or are developing positive ideas toward a better future. Some of the examples suggested are listed.

1. The World Order Model – Mendlovitz and company.
2. The Conserver Society Project of the Science Council of Canada.
3. Toffler's example.
4. Lindisfarne (W. I. Thompson), Findhorn, and others.
5. The new alchemists.
6. The Mitchell Prize.
7. Eco-colonizers and religious groups – for past history of such groups, see Norman Cohen, *Pursuit of the Millenium*.
8. China.
9. Scandinavia.
10. Community established by Danilo Dolci near Palermo, Italy – an educational agricultural community.
11. Basaglia psychiatric communities in Italy.
12. Dr. Jarrett's hospital experiment in Illinois.
13. Rudolph Steiner communal villages for the retarded in the U.S., Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, and South Africa.
14. The Kibbutzim.
15. New politics in Tanzania and Zaire.
16. Any New England town.
17. Experiments in nonpunitive communities at the University of Kansas and Drake University.

10. Postscript

After reading the transcripts and listening to some of the audiotapes of the proceedings I very much regret that so much of the richness of the proceedings has had to be left out. It's painful, for example, to exclude the strong statement by John Platt demanding rejection of the red herrings that impede the designing of a total sustainable global society, with his recommendation that we carefully study John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* and once and for all reject Mill's *Utilitarianism*. It's difficult to ignore the pragmatic cautions of the broadcaster Aubrey Singer, as well as his concern for poetic creativity in the activity of communication; and to skim over the references by Marshall McLuhan to the Club of Rome as a "hardware system, not a software system," and to the BBC as a literary rather than an electronic media agency. And there was considerable discussion about meta-inventions, and meta-processes, leading to Lewis Perelman's suggestion that the workshop had been "a meta-process: a process to invent a process." There were the matrices offered by John McHale, and by Alvin Toffler, that would help an organization such as ours evaluate its social objectives. And there was the cautioning concern of Eleonora Masini and other participants for the rights of the individual and the importance of values other than material values. But the editor's problem, as always, is where to draw the line; and the line was drawn, to some extent arbitrarily, in terms of the more salient features of the agenda of the workshop. For any participant who wishes a full review of the workshop, the audiotapes and transcriptions of the proceedings will be retained in OECA's Media Resources Centre.

Toward the end of the final plenary session there emerged a concern that in the development of the Futures Project, in our earnest yearning for a peaceful and just global society, we might overlook aesthetic values. Saul Mendlovitz urged us not to overlook poetic expression in our productions, and Aubrey Singer read to us one of his poems. It seems appropriate, then, to end this report with poetry, and I have chosen the following excerpt from "They Are Hostile Nations," by Margaret Atwood,[1] one of Canada's best-known poets and novelists:

In view of the fading animals
the proliferation of sewers and fears
the sea clogging, the air
nearing extinction

we should be kind, we should
take warning, we should forgive
each other . . .

We need each others'
breathing, warmth, surviving
is the only war
we can afford, stay

walking with me, there is almost
time / if we can only
make it as far as

the (possibly) last summer

[1] From *Power Politics*, Anansi, Toronto, 1971. Reprinted by kind permission of the publisher.

Appendix A: The Study Groups

Group A

Lewis Auerbach
Magda Cordell McHale
Jack Porter
Yoshikazu Sakamoto
Alvin Toffler
David Walker
Norman White*

Secretary-organizer:
Barbara Mezon

Group B

Andrew Baines*
James Hanley
Marshall McLuhan
Saul Mendlovitz
John McHale
Arthur Porter
Aubrey Singer
Heidi Toffler
Ignacy Waniewicz

Secretary-organizer:
Margaret Gascoigne

Group C

James Dator
Ran Ide
Ray Jackson*
Ian Macdonald
Eleonora Masini
Lewis Miller
Lewis Perelman
John Platt

Secretary-organizer:
Marion Duncan

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*Rapporteur

Appendix B: Proposed Questions for Group Discussions

Questions prepared by
Lewis Auerbach

Group A: The Purpose

According to James Dator, the fundamental purpose of the project should be:

1. To alert people to "the future" as an area of necessary and proper concern to themselves;
2. To encourage people to gain greater control over their future by providing them with
   - ideas and metaphors
   - information
   - access to information
   - channels of communication
   - opportunities to unlock their imagination and creativity concerning desirable and feasible futures
   - political structures which facilitate their realizing their desired futures.

Are these feasible goals? Why? Keeping in mind the feasibility, or lack of feasibility, of these goals, consider the following questions:

In what ways is this purpose likely to mean the same thing in Ontario as it means in England or the United States? How do the differences thus affect the avowedly political purpose of the entire proposal?

Politics enters at another level. In order to gain control of the future, it helps to know what future is desirable. Should OECA have a position in the future? If so, what should it be? If not, does this mean that OECA opens itself to the possibility of being "colonized" by others?

If OECA provides political structures, will they facilitate *all* possible futures? Or just some? Are there any elements of "enlightened despotism" in this proposal?

About information – is it really possible to provide information without also supplying a viewpoint which has ordered and acquired it? What is the implication of this for the goal of providing information and channels of comment? Is it really to be two-way, or is it just supposed to stimulate dialogue? In other words *what should the link be between the political purpose of this project and the political system?* Should it be direct or indirect? Immediate or far in the future?

Is it worthwhile exploring, as Dr. Baines suggests, the motives of the producers and James Dator? Would this add or subtract from the project?

Group B: The Means

In his description of the "overall tasks of the Futures Project," James Dator outlined the following six areas:

1. Provide sufficient and imaginative televised, videotaped, filmed, or radio-transmitted programming on the above themes.
2. Provide sufficient and imaginative printed, audiovisual, and other support material which deepens, broadens, and interprets the media programming.
3. Aid in the development of clubs, community viewing/action groups, and other educational/political structures which will help people use this and other material to think and act scientifically and creatively so as to control their own future.
4. Continue to help OECA itself ensure that the concepts of alternative futures and the pertinent techniques of futures research become a normal part of its own basic planning and policy-making.
5. Help the various operational and support sections of OECA – including individual programming units – incorporate an alternative futures perspective into their operations.
6. Continue to deepen contacts with the local educational and political community in Toronto, Ontario, and Canada so that it will support and demand future-oriented programming and actions of OECA.

The means, therefore, to reach the goals include videotape, film, television and radio broadcasts, audiovisual and other (presumably print) materials, as well as a variety of futures clubs and other educational/political structures.

Please consider each of these means and assess their potential for contributing to the fundamental purposes of the project. In so doing, try to assess the relative importance and interdependence of these *and other* means not necessarily available to OECA for developing "future consciousness." Are certain of these means more appropriate for OECA than others? Should certain ones have a higher priority than others or is it more important, if resources are scarce, to have a smaller number of units which are truly "multi-media"?

Is it really possible to provide information if the desire for information is not generated by the recipient?

In short, are the means appropriate to the task? If not, how should the means, the task, or both be altered?

Group C: The Content

The major themes which James Dator has elaborated are the following:

Images
Trends
Counter-Trends
Colonizers and the Colonized
Anticipatory Democracy

Please evaluate these themes, preferably in the light of the stated-by-Dator "Purposes," eliminating any which seem wrong or adding any which seem better.

With the (possibly revised) list of themes, consider what the group agrees is the most difficult theme. What kinds of contents would be "right" for this theme? If there is time, please do the same for at least one other theme.

Appendix C: Participants' Comments on the Report

A draft of the report was sent to all participants in Workshop 2 on "Alternative Futures and the Role of the Media," to indicate something about its format, and the context within which their participation appears. I took liberties with their language, although I tried to preserve the flavour of their presentations. The following extracts were among comments invited.

L. M.

Lewis Auerbach

The words are fine, but it's really time now to *do* something. The report seemed to strike the right note. I think it was an *excellent* idea to include the letters of reply.

Aubrey Singer

I have now read your draft report of the Workshop. It seems to me to be very good and (unfortunately) very accurate.

Just publish it and be damned!

John and Magda McHale

We think the report is excellent. It does convey the essence of what was discussed in a manner that gives a good flavour of the larger whole.

Norman White

The long delay in commenting on the report is no reflection of the level of my interest but, rather, a comment on the future as choreographed by our post office.

I have no emendations or criticisms to make, because the main drift of the report is quite close to what I recall of the discussion. Much of the most interesting material in the meeting emerged, however, in the group sessions.

The subject, the conduct of the discussion, and the contributions of the participants were all so intercatalytic.

R. W. Jackson

The account of the plenary session was very good.

All I can add is to draw attention to one theme or undercurrent related to a couple of points – a concern with some negative aspects of the electronic communications medium itself – the medium is the message, if you like. It tends to instil a passive-onlooker approach to the world (maybe activist cells are better – Mendlovitz). It contributes to information overload and all the syndromes to which that gives rise (Toffler and others). And it binds or colonizes the mind of the viewer by the images it transmits (just about everybody). In the latter are included the meta-messages, such as (I do not remember this actually being mentioned) "my truthful mien is false – I am hired to do this" or "it's alright to take money for saying what I don't believe." Much of the discussion in the subsequent sessions was concerned with the nature and meaning of the images which are being or should be conveyed, with how the medium can be used to help people *cope*, and with the importance of an interactive or 2-way process. I would re-emphasize the information-on-demand facility and the de-centralized community approach.

Saul Mendlovitz

The report is a very impressive synthesis-summary statement of the conference. Two inputs, predictably enough, have to do with my own perspective. To take the sting off that a little bit, at least they are not my own statements but statements made by other people.

I feel that Aubrey Singer's point that "the need of the world isn't everything" – that chiding me in my mean Jeremiah mood – ought to be included in the document since it makes the point that a lot of people are just interested in living their lives even though the end of the world may be coming: and we should take recognition of that as a genuine value and not merely as something to overcome.

Secondly, Norman White had said something during the proceedings that he felt that even if Mendlovitz was wrong, it was foolish not to behave as if he, Mendlovitz, were right. He had two reasons. First, he felt that Mendlovitz's requests for the world are what prudent human beings want or should want to do under the circumstances. Secondly, he pointed out that it would be a much better world for everyone, including top dogs, if we behave in terms of there being a finite-arms-escalating-ecologically-collapsing-social-injustice-world which needs drastic transformation. (This summary of his comments is mine but I do think it reflects accurately what he said.)

I listed three competing strands toward transformation and I should like to add a fourth, namely, self-reliance. There are, throughout the world, groups of people running through small communes in New Hampshire to Tanzania to Maoist China who are beginning to argue some form of autarky from the general human society. Whether it is possible to do so is not clear but it certainly is becoming an important stance and perhaps even an ideology.

Yoshikazu Sakamoto

I read the summary report carefully and have no revisions to make. Thank you for your excellent job and wish you a success in the future of your Futures Project.